Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/treatiseconcerni0000john

Rebecca Wendell
20th Feby
1822.

A TREATISE
CONCERNING
THE SANCTIFICATION
OF THE
LORD'S DAY.

WHEREIN
THE MORALITY OF THE SABBATH,
OR THE
PERPETUAL OBLIGATION OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT
IS MAINTAINED AGAINST ADVERSARIES;
AND THE
RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION OF THE LORD'S DAY, OR FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, AS OUR CHRISTIAN SABBATH, IS STRONGLY PROVED BY SCRIPTURE ARGUMENTS.

Containing also,
MANY SPECIAL DIRECTIONS AND ADVICES
For the better performing the most necessary and comprehensive duty of
SABBATH-SANCTIFICATION.

To which are added,
(BY WAY OF APPENDIX,)
MEDITATIONS FOR THE SABBATH-DAY,
PROPER FOR FAMILIES.

BY THE REV. JOHN WILLISON,
Late Minister of the Gospel at Dundee.

Rev. i 10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

ALBANY:
PUBLISHED BY J. BOARDMAN.
G. J. Loomis & Co.—Printers.
1820.

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

DISCARD
LIBRARY
LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM
EXPOSITION PARK

RECOMMENDATIONS.

MR. JOHN BOARDMAN,

I am much gratified that you are about to republish Willison on the Sabbath. It is an instructive useful book, which I wish was in every family. It vindicates the sabbath from the objections of INFIDELS, and with a divine blessing, will teach every CHRISTIAN how to "KEEP IT HOLY UNTO THE LORD."

I am your affectionate friend,

JOHN CHESTER.

Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Albany.

The reputation of Mr. Willison as a judicious and pious divine has long been established in the Christian Church. Of his many useful works, all eminently distinguished, by a vein of experimental and practical piety, that now proposed for republication is not the least valuable. The style, indeed, and the manner of arrangement, mark the period and the country in which it was written, and may appear somewhat antiquated: but all who revere the Lord's day as the great moral institute for the preservation of his name, truth and worship in the world, and who wish to sanctify it to the high and happy ends for which it has been ordained, will find in this book an acceptable and useful aid. It is with the utmost cheerfulness that we recommend it as every way worthy of the patronage of American Christians.

ELIPHALET NOTT, President of Union College.

ARTHUR J. STANSBURY, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Albany.

I most cheerfully concur in the above recommendation.

JOHN FINLAY,

Pastor of the Baptist Church, Albany.

School of Theology
at Claremont

A 11623

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Rev. J. Willison's work, on the Sanctification of the Sabbath, I have read, and with some minor objections, highly approve. I think it will be useful, and join with my Brethren in the ministry in recommending it to the patronage of the public, and especially to all those who would Sanctify the Sabbath.

JOHN M. BRADFORD, D. D.
Pastor of the North, Reformed Dutch Church, Albany.

It is the impression of the Subscriber, as far as he has had opportunity of forming a judgment concerning the work, that the publication of Willison on the Sabbath would be useful to the interests of religion.

JOHN DE WITT.
Pastor of the South, Reformed Dutch Church, Albany.

I have frequently read Willison's Treatise on the Sanctification of the Sabbath, with pleasure and profit—and rejoice in the prospect of its introduction generally into families. I most cordially wish you every success in the Publication.

T. M. AULEY. L L. D.
Minister of the Gospel, and Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in Union College, Schenectady.

March, 1820.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE FIRST PHILADELPHIA EDITION.

Dear Sir,

Touching Willison on the Sabbath—the style is obsolete, yet it contains much excellent matter, that may be useful even in our day: for notwithstanding the great in-

creasing Gospel light, there are still many who stupidly believe that Christ has done away the obligatory observance of the Sabbath. I am glad you are about to republish it—I wish you success in it, and from my heart I wish it a wide circulation.

JAMES PATTERSON, Pastor of the
First Presbyterian Church in the Northern Liberties.

Mr. A. WALKER.

By the REV. DR. JANEWAY, Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

WILLISON'S TREATISE ON THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE LORD'S DAY, is a valuable work. He discusses in it the several questions relative to the Sabbath. The Divine appointment of the Sabbath—its moral obligation, and consequent perpetuity of the fourth commandment;—and the change of the *seventh* for the *first* day of the week, in honour of the resurrection of our Lord and the completion of his glorious work of redemption, he proves with much force of argument. The manner in which the Sabbath is to be sanctified, the rest from secular concerns which it requires, and the various religious duties to be done on that holy day, are discoursed on at length. And to all he adds various directions in relation to public and private worship, and to guard us against the sins that profane the Sabbath. On the whole, a perusal of this treatise will be found useful to Christians; animating and encouraging them to the due and sacred observance of that day which God has appointed as a sign between himself and his people.

J. J. JANEWAY.

Mr. A. WALKER.

APPENDIX.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE SABBATH DAY.

Page

MEDITATION I. On the Burial of Christ, from John xix. 40, &c. 281

MEDITATION II. On the Resurrection of Christ, from Thess. i. 10. "Whom God hath raised from the dead," 283

MEDITATION III. Of the certainty of Christ's Resurrection, ... 289

MEDITATION IV. From Eph. vi. 16. Redeem the time, ... 297

MEDITATION V. Upon John xx. 26. "And when he so said, he showed them his hands and his feet. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord," 300

MEDITATION VI. On the Sabbath, its being a delight, from Isaiah lviii. 23. "Call the Sabbath a delight," . . . . . 302.

PREFACE.

That wise king, Solomon, observes, (Eccl. iii. 1.) "To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." And if there be a time and season allowed for every thing and purpose, even the meanest things and purposes in the world; surely an infinitely wise God will allow a proper time and season for the best things and purposes, and particularly for his solemn worship and service, which is the most necessary and excellent purpose in the world. It is not enough that we give God, from whom we have all our time, a share of every day for his service; no, we owe him also some whole days for his solemn and public worship: yea, it is agreeable to the dictates of the light of nature, and of sound reason, that one whole day of every week should be dedicated to him for that end.

All nations through the world have had their seasons and set times for devotion and sacrifices. The heathens who worshipped dumb idols, had their festivals and holy-days; and particularly one day of the week, which they esteemed more sacred than the rest. The Turks, who have taken up with the most unreasonable delusions and impostures, do still retain the impressions of the rationality and equity of this thing, that there should be a certain day of the week set apart for the solemn worship of God. Indeed the light of nature, without some other help, could not have determined men universally to dedicate the seventh day of their time to God, more than the sixth or eighth: but seeing the wise Creator of the world, and author of time, thought fit from the beginning to measure time by days, and parcel out these days into such remarkable periods as weeks, or the revolution of seven days, to be constantly observed all the world over, it is most consonant to reason and equity, that one day of each week should be holy to the Lord.

But, besides the light of nature, we have the light of revelation for this point: God hath expressly appointed in his word one day in seven, to be kept holy for his solemn worship; neither hath he left the particular day to men's own choice, but hath chosen it for them. And now, in the New Testament, he points out the first day of the week to be the Christian Sabbath to the end of the world, as is made evident in the following treatise.

The Jews have their *Saturday* Sabbath, which they glory in, and call the Queen of the week: The Mahometans keep the *Friday*, as being Mahomet's birth-day. The Parthians and some other Pagan nations observe Tuesday, and esteem it above all other days of the week. But it is the discriminating badge of the professors of Christianity through all the world, to celebrate the first day of the week, being Christ's resurrection-day, and hence called the Lord's day. Now, though the Jews and some few others plead that the seventh day from the creation is unalterable by virtue of the fourth command, it is shewed in this treatise, that the words of the fourth command are so framed, that they may be applied to any day of the week that God doth please to pitch upon for the Sabbath, whether it be the first or last of the seven days. For when it is said, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;" it doth not mean the seventh day from the creation, but any seventh day after six days labour, which God pitches on; upon which account it is not called *that* seventh day, but the seventh day. Neither is the seventh day mentioned in the first words of the command, which contain the substance of it; for it is said only, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" not the seventh day. Nor is the seventh day mentioned in the last words of the command, which contain the formal reason of it; for it is said only, "The Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it," not the seventh day.

As to the first day of the week, our Christian Sabbath, the great Lord of our time hath appropriated this day to himself, marked it with his seal, and hath put his name upon it, calling it, Rev. i. 10. *Hemera Kuriaka*, the Lord's day; even as he calls the holy supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20. *Diapnon Kuriakon*, the Lord's supper; because the one was his institution as well as the other, and set apart for keeping up his memory, and shewing forth his glory. Wherefore no true

Christian, or lover of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be indifferent about the keeping of this holy day: For as the holy observing of this day is an open and visible owning of the Lord Jesus (whose name it bears) for our Lord and Master; so the neglect of this day is a plain disowning of him, and an open slighting of the benefits of his resurrection. O that men would think on this, and consider what they do, when they neglect or contemn the Lord's day!

Though the way of Sabbath-sanctification be the good old way, appointed by God ever since he created man upon the earth; yet there is no way more hated, no duty more opposed by Satan and wicked men: which we need not be surprised at, seeing it is a special fence to all religion, and a great bulwark against the torrent of impiety that runs in the world. And that true piety is so low in most places, and vice and immorality so generally prevail, is mainly to be imputed to the abounding neglect and contempt of the holy Sabbath: for common experience doth testify, that where the Lord's day is most strictly observed, there Christian knowledge, piety and morality, do prosper most; and where the Sabbath is disregarded, there all these do decay. The consideration whereof should excite all the lovers of God and holiness, to use their utmost endeavours to support the credit and maintain the dignity of the Sabbath against all its enemies.

This consideration hath moved me to contribute my mite upon this excellent subject, in the following treatise, which is partly controversial and partly practical: for confuting the enemies of the Sabbath, and for instructing all in the divine warrant for sanctifying this holy day, and in the right manner of doing it. There are two essential things in the Christian religion, which all should make conscience of; sincerely to believe its truths, and faithfully to practise its duties. The first of these hath great influence upon the second; for, if the Christian truths be not firmly believed, the Christian duties will be ill performed. Now, the best means for promoting both the Christian faith and Christian practice, is the sanctification of the Lord's day.

Had it not been for the observation of the Sabbath, the truths of Christianity had been quite razed out of the minds of the most part: for as the Lord's day, of itself, is a bright and lively memorial of our redemption by Jesus Christ; so

upon this day we constantly have sounded in our ears the truths of that religion which Christ and his apostles delivered unto the world, and the excellency of them inculcated upon us. And as the observation of the Sabbath is a great preservative of the truth of Christianity, so it is also to the duties thereof. God hath set this one duty as a hedge or fence for keeping all the rest; for, by keeping the Sabbath conscientiously, the soul is notably disposed and put in frame for serving God in every religious duty. The frequent recurring of this day, and the gospel ordinances therein dispensed, serve to continue the remembrance of Christ and heaven among men, keep sin and vice under constant rebukes, and put atheism and infidelity to the blush. Take away the observation of the Lord's day, then the worship of God would be cast off, and atheism, profaneness, and all disorders, like a flood, would break in upon us.

We may look upon the duty of Sabbath-sanctification to be of no less consequence to the practice of Christianity, than Luther reckoned the article of justification to be to the doctrine of it, when he called it *articulus stantis seu cadentis ecclesiæ;* for, if once we make a gap in this hedge of piety, serious godliness will run out at it, and a flood of impiety and looseness rush in upon us. It was surely the sense of this that determined the wisest of emperors, kings, parliaments, and church councils and synods, to frame and publish so many excellent laws and acts for the strict observation of the Lord's day, agreeable to the divine laws thereanent. It would be happy for churches and nations, if these were put in execution, and all sorts of men brought to have a due regard to them.

But notwithstanding of all the laws, divine and human, for the holy observation of the Lord's day, there are many in the age wherein we live, who adventure to pour contempt upon this holy day. Some there are who dispute against the morality of the Sabbath, and disown the standing and perpetual obligation of the fourth command. Others, though they own the obligation of the command, so far as to forbear servile work, and attend public worship on the Sabbath, yet plead for carnal diversions and recreations after public worship is over. Many would incline to the Papists' way of celebrating the Sabbath, who, after mass and even-song (as they call it,) go presently to piping and dancing, and

then to the ale-house; the same way that the Israelites celebrated the feast of the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 6. "The people ate and drank, and rose up to play." If this profane course were allowed, as of old, in times of antichristian darkness, many would then call the Sabbath a delight, and be, in some measure, reconciled to it; but, when they hear that the whole Sabbath is to be spent in religious duties and exercises, they murmur, and say, as those in Mal. i. 13. "What a weariness is it?"

It would be no greivance to many to see that old abomination of the *Book of Sports* revived and authourised among us: I mean, that infamous declaration for liberty of sports and recreation on the Lord's day, published by authority in the year 1633, and appointed to be read from the pulpits; the prelates consenting to it, and persecuting those ministers who refused to read it. O what heinous God-provoking wickedness was it, for civil and ecclesiastical rulers to unite in promoting the profanation of the Sabbath by such methods! As the heavy judgments of God followed them for such avowed profanation, so those in our age have reason to fear his judgments, who continue to be of the same profane disposition. Oh, is it not evident that sports and pastimes do unfit the mind for spiritual service, and take off men's thoughts from what is serious and solemn? Do they not put the heart out of frame for attending on God, and for holding communion with him in holy duties and ordinances? This is shewed more fully in the following treatise.

Again, there are others who observe this day no better than the beasts do: they only rest from their ordinary labour, and spend the day in idleness and sloth; which is to keep the Sabbath of an ox or ass, not of a reasonable creature. To sanctify the Sabbath, is not to keep it merely as a rest from our common employments, or to keep it as an idle day: but to keep it as a holy day, a day set apart for God's glory, and for promoting our salvation. But, alas! such is the spiritual sloth and idleness of many poor careless souls on this day, they labour as little for their souls on it, as they do for their bodies; they sleep, loiter, lie at home, and seldom go to any worship at all; if they go out of doors, it is for their diversion, to take a walk, to pay a visit, or the like, but not to attend God's worship. Many, alas! will go a dozen of miles to a market for a little gain, that will not go

one mile, nor a few steps to the church, to attend the gospel-market for enriching their souls. If the bell that calls them to the worship of God, did advertise them of a stage-play, or of some idle pastime, perhaps they would be found there among the first; but, for spiritual work, they have an aversion to it.

Moreover there are many who go to church and attend ordinances this day, rather to please a natural conscience, or support their reputation in the world, than to serve God or save their souls. Or perhaps they go because it is the fashion, or the way in which they have been brought up; but alas! leaving their hearts behind them, they present their bodies to God and no more. And hence it is, that in the time of the most solemn worship, they have their eyes either wandering after vanity, or else shut with drowsiness, and sleep; they find no delight in the Sabbath, taste no sweetness in ordinances, know nothing of communion with God in them: they understand not the Psalmists language, "A day in Gods courts is better than a thousand any where else." No, this day is to them the longest and most wearisome day of all the week; the religious exercises of it are irksome and burdensome to them. It may be said of them, as of Doeg the Edomite, 1 Sam. xxi. 7. "He was that day detained before the Lord." They long to be released from the service of that day, and glad when it is over. Alas! the minds of many are so set upon the world, that they complain in their hearts of the length of this day, as the Israelites of old, Amos viii. 5. "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn; and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" They count all these days lost days, that bring them in no worldly gain. Hence it was, that the heathens (as Senaca tells us) counted the Jews a foolish people, because they lost a full seventh part of their lives, to wit, by observing the Sabbath. But, ah! it is to be lamented, that not heathens only, but also many profest Christians, count the Sabbath a lost day: O what base ingratitude is this to God, for the invaluable privilege and blessing of the Sabbath to the souls of men!

Lastly, there are, besides these mentioned, some prodigies of wickedness in the world, persons who prosecute their lewd and profane courses with more vigour on this holy day than upon any other; and so make this day of holy rest the

devil's working day, and consume it wholly upon their lusts! O how daring an affront must this be to a great and holy God, to make that a day to serve the devil, a day to improve in vice and debauchery, which the Lord hath instituted to be a day for his own worship, and for our improvement in piety and devotion!

It is for remedying these woful abuses of the Sabbath that I have written the ensuing treatise; and, to make it more generally useful to the poor, I have shortened this fourth edition of it, by leaving out the *Help of Prayer* which was subjoined to the former, and possibly may be afterwards published by itself. I have heard of the usefulness of this treatise to some who have read it: O that God would bless it to many more, and make it the means to preserve and promote the love and esteem of the Lord's day in the hearts of many! As serious godliness never did, so it never will thrive nor flourish in the world, when or where the Lord's day is disregarded: long experience confirms it, that the sin of Sabbath-breaking is a woful inlet to impiety and profaneness. They who once begin to make little difference betwixt the Lord's day and other days, will easily be brought to make little difference betwixt the Lord's name and other names, the Lords table and other tables, the Lord's book and other books: whereas a conscientious regard to his holy day is a strong fence to religion, being a mighty aweband to the soul against the commission of sin, and the neglect of duty. The Lord's day is an unspeakable blessing to a lost world, and the sweetest day that ever dawned upon it; it ought to be the delight of our souls, and rejoiceing of our hearts. Every wise man that knows the value of this day, will have a peculiar esteem for it above all the days of the week, and will reckon every minute of it precious, and desire that none of it be mispent. What Christ said to his disciples concerning the loaves and fishes, he says to us concerning his holy day, *Gather up the fragments*, "Gather up the spare hours and minutes of it, count them as precious as the goldsmith doth the small filings of his gold, let nothing of Sabbath time be lost, improve it wholly for God and your souls."

This treatise I recommend chiefly to families, because the duty of sanctifying the Sabbath doth nearly concern all families as such: for all governors of families are charged,

by the fourth command, to see that it be done in all their dwellings: and by the command, they are made responsible for *their children*, *servants*, and for all that lodge *within their gates*, that none of them be allowed to break the Sabbath. If any masters of families be excited by this treatise to mind their proper duty, I have my reward; but let the glorious Author of the Sabbath alone have the praise.

May all of us get grace to keep the Sabbath of our God, and choose the things that please him, and take hold of his covenant, that so we may be numbered among those whom he will bring to his holy mountain, and make joyful in his house of prayer! *Amen.*

Some Instances of the great regard which our Ancestors and Legislators manifested to the Lord's Day, and of the Laws and Acts made in Ancient Times for the strict Observation of it, with those of this Nation and Church which still stand in force; being so many Testimonies to the Morality of the Sabbath, and the divine Institution of the Lord's Day.

I SHALL not stand here to notice the high regard which kings, prophets, and righteous men among the Jews had for the Sabbath, recorded in the Old Testament; the passages being obvious to those who are versant in the holy scriptures, sundry of which are introduced in the following treatise. Neither shall I stand citing the testimonies of learned and pious divines at home or abroad, for confirming the doctrine of this treatise; seeing these are so many as would fill a volume by themselves. I shall only mention some of those of more public authority, and which may be of greater weight with the generality of readers.

The ancient Christians, who lived nearest the apostles' times, still spoke of the Lord's day with the highest veneration and respect; such as Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others; who also give an account of the particular religious services performed by Christians on that day. It is observable, that the Christians then commonly called that day among themselves, *the first day of the week*, and *the Lord's day*, as it is denominated in the New Testament;

likewise, they sometimes called it the *eighth day*, because it succeeded the Jewish seventh day, and came to be celebrated in the room of it, and seems to be pointed at by the eighth day mentioned by Ezek. xliii. 27. I grant that some of the fathers, such as Justin and Turtullian, in their apologies to the heathen emperors, called this day *Sunday;* the reason whereof is plain, they were speaking to heathens, who always called this day by that name, and so would not have known certainly what day they meant, if they had not called it Sunday; which name indeed was given it by the heathens, because of their dedicating this day to the sun, which was the chief of the planetary gods worshipped by them. But now, when that reason is ceased, and Christians speak of this day among themselves, it is not proper to give it the name of Sunday any more.

With what esteem and veneration doth Ignatius, that ancient martyr, speak of this day, in his epistle to the Magnesians! Saith he, "Let us not Jewishly sabbatize, but let us 'rest spiritually; and, instead of the old Sabbath, let every 'lover of Christ celebrate the LORD's DAY, the best and 'most eminent of days, in which our Life arose.'

So strictly was this day set apart by the ancients for public devotion, that very early the synod of Illeberis ordained, "That if any man, dwelling in a city, (where churches 'are near at hand) should for three Lord's days keep from 'church, he should be suspended from communion with the 'church.'

In the fourth century, the historian Eusebius tells us that Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor, issued an edict, requiring the whole Roman empire to observe the LORD's DAY, in memory of those things which were done by the common Saviour of all men; and bearing that he counted that day the best and chief of days, truly the LORD's, and a day of salvation; and that he ordered his army to offer up prayers to God, and required all men every where to apply themselves to religious worship; and that no work nor any thing should be allowed to hinder their prayers and devotions that day.

We read also of many ancient laws made by kings in England, prohibiting all kinds of servile work, merchandise or traffic, on the Lord's day, upon very severe penalties; as that made by king Ina about the year 688; that made by

king Alfred in the year 876; that made by Edward his son about the year 912; that made by king Edgar about the year 966. which required that the celebration of the Lord's day should begin from nine o'clock on Saturday night: also that law made by king Canute about the year 1026, to the same effect with that of Edgar's and more particularly and strictly forbidding all trade, and all meetings of people for secular affairs or converses; requiring them to abstain from hunting and every worldly employment on this day.

To the same purpose might be adduced many canons of ecclesiastical synods and councils in England, France, Germany, and other nations; a great number whereof we find collected by Dr. Francis White, bishop of Ely, in 1635. Likewise we find great zeal manifested by a convocation of the Scots clergy for the Lord's day, at their meeting at Perth in the year 1180, as narrated by archbishop Spotiswood: they ordained, that every Saturday from twelve o'clock should be set apart for preparation for the Lord's day; and that all the people on Saturday evening, at the sound of the bell, should address themselves to hear prayers, and should abstain from all worldly labours till Monday morning.

But I shall pass from those more ancient laws and canons, to give a brief account of some acts of parliament both in England and Scotland, which are now in force, for observing the Lord's day; and which all magistrates of burghs, justices of peace, and other judges, should and might execute presently, if they were disposed to do it.

In England, *Primo Car.* I. cap. 1. 'Forasmuch as there 'is nothing more acceptable to God than the true and sin-'cere worship of him according to his holy will, and that 'the holy keeping of the Lord's day is a principal part of 'the true service of God, which in very many places of this 'realm hath been, and now is, profaned and neglected by 'disorderly sorts of people: It is therefore enacted, That 'there shall be no more meetings, assemblies, or concourse 'of people on the Lord's day, for any sport and pastimes 'whatsoever,' &c.

Tertio Car. I. cap. 1. it is enacted, 'That no carrier, 'carman, wainman, nor drover of cattle, shall travel on the 'Lord's day, upon pain of forfeiting twenty shillings: Nor 'any butcher shall be allowed to kill or sell meat,' &c.

Vigesimo-nono Car. II. cap. 7. it is enacted, 'That all 'the laws enacted and in force concerning the observation 'of the Lord's day, and repairing to the church thereon, be 'carefully put in execution: And that all and every person 'and persons whatsoever shall on every Lord's day apply 'themselves to the observation of the same, by exercising 'themselves thereon in the duties of piety and true religion 'publicly and privately; and that no tradesman, artificer, 'workman, labourer, or other person whatsoever, shall do 'or exercise any worldly labour, business, or work of their 'ordinary callings upon the Lord's days, or any part thereof '(works of necessity and charity only excepted): And that 'every person, being of the age of fourteen years and up-'wards, offending in the premises, shall, for every such of-'fence, forfeit the sum of five shillings; and that no person 'or persons whatever shall publicly cry, shew forth, or ex-'pose to sale, any wares, merchandises, fruit, herbs, goods, 'or chattles whatsoever upon the Lord's day, or any part 'thereof, upon pain that every person so offending shall for-'feit the same goods, so cried, or shewed forth, or exposed 'to sale.'

It is further enacted, 'That no drover, horse-courser, 'waggoner, butcher, higler, they or any of their servants, 'shall travel or come in to his or their inn or lodging upon 'the Lord's day, or any part thereof, upon pain that each 'and every such offender shall forfeit twenty shillings for 'every such offence. And if any other person travels on 'the Lord's day, and should then be robbed, the hundred is 'not to be answerable for it; and whatever the person loses 'he is barred from bringing any action for such robbers. 'No waterman is to be employed to travel except as li-'censed for any extraordinary occasion. No person is al-'lowed to serve, to execute, or caused to be served or exe-'cuted, any writ, process, warrant, order, judgment, or de-'vice, except in cases of treason, felony, or breach of the 'peace. The impeachment of offenders is to be within ten 'days, and a third part of the forfeitures is appointed to the 'prosecutor,' &c.

Some Acts of the Parliament of Scotland for the religious observation of the LORD'S DAY, *which still stand in force.*

JAMES VI. Parl. 6. chap. 71. It is enacted, 'That there 'be no markets on the Sabbath-day: And that no gaming,

'playing, passing to taverns and ale-houses, or selling of 'meat or drink, or wilful remaining from the parish-kirk in 'time of sermon or prayers, upon the Sabbath-day, be used, 'under the pains of twenty shilling Scots: And who re-'fuse, or are unable to pay the said pains, shall be put and 'holden in the stocks, or such other engine for public pun-'ishment, for the space of twenty-four hours,' &c.

Charles II. Parl. Act. 1. 18. entitled, *Act for the due observation of the Lord' day;* which act doth discharge, 'All 'going of salt-pans, mills or kilns, under the pains of twen-'ty pounds Scots, to be paid by the heritors and possessors 'thereof: and also all salmon fishing, hiring of shearers, 'carrying of loads, keeping of markets, or using of mer-'chandise upon the said day, and all other profanation 'thereof, under the pain of ten pounds Scots, the one half 'thereof to be paid by the said fisher or shearer hired, and 'the other half by the persons hiring. And if the offender 'be not able to pay the said penalties, that he be exemplarily 'punished in his body according to the merits of his fault. 'This act is again ratified, *Charl.* II. Parl. 2. Sess. 3. chap. '22. Likewise it is ratified by king *William*, Parl. 1. June '15, 1693. And also, that parliament made several new 'laws to the said purpose, June 28, 1695, October 9, 1696, 'January 31, 1701. And in these acts, they ratify, renew, 'and revive, all former laws against Sabbath-breaking, and 'strictly require and enjoin all inferior magistrates to put 'the same to exact and punctual execution against all per-'sons without exception; with certifications, that any ma-'gistrate that shall refuse, neglect or delay, to execute the 'said laws, upon application of any minister or kirk-session, 'or any person in their name, informing and offering suffi-'cient probation, shall be liable *toties quoties* to a fine of an 'hundred pounds Scots by the Lords of Session,' &c.

Likewise our sovereigns, upon their coming to the throne, do still emit proclamations for executing the laws against Sabbath-breaking, and other vices; and wherein they charge all magistrates and judges to suppress and punish the profanation of the Lord's day by gaming, selling of liquors, and otherwise; and they require and command all persons whatsoever, decently and reverently to attend the worship of God on every Lord's day, on pain of their highest displeasure, and with being proceeded against with the utmost rigour that may be by law.

To these acts of parliament and proclamations, I might subjoin some acts of the general assembly of the church of Scotland against Sabbath-breaking, and for the better observation of the Lord's day. Many such acts have they made since our reformation from popery: I shall only mention a few of them.

Ass. 1639. at Edinburgh, August 29. They made an act, entitled, *Act anent keeping of the Lord's day*, in which we have these words: 'The General Assembly recommend to 'the several presbyteries the execution of the old acts of 'assemblies against the breach of the Sabbath day, by going 'of mills, salt-pans, salmon-fishing, or any such like labour,' &c.

Ass. 1646, at Edinburgh, June 18. They made an act, entitled, *Act against loosing of ships and barks on the Lord's day*, which runs thus: 'The General Assembly, un-'derstanding how much the Lord's day is profaned by skip-'pers and other sea-faring men, do therefore discharge and 'inhibit all skippers and sailors to begin any voyage on the 'Lord's day, or to loose any ships, barks, or boats out of the 'harbour or road upon that day: And who shall do on the 'contrary thereof, shall be censured as profaners of the 'Sabbath.'

Ass. 1699, at Edinburgh, January 30, in their act against profaneness, they have these words: 'The General Assem-'bly recommends to kirk-sessions and presbyteries, the vig-'orous, impartial, and yet prudent exercise of discipline 'against all immorality; especially drunkenness and filthi-'ness, cursing, swearing, and profaning the Lord's day, 'which too much abound: And that they apply to the ma-'gistrate for the execution of the good laws made against 'immorality and profaneness. And seeing it is observed, 'that in burghs, especially those of the greatest resort, as 'Edinburgh, many sit too late in taverns, especially on the 'Saturday's night, and men of business pretend they do it 'for the relaxation of their minds; through which, some 'neglect the public worship of the Lord's day in the fore-'noon, and others attend the worship drowsily: Therefore 'the General Assembly recommends it to all ministers, 'where such sinful customs are, to represent to the people, 'both publicly and privately, the sin and evil thereof; and 'to call them to redeem that time which they have free from

'business, and to employ it in converse with God, about 'their souls' state, and in preparation for the Sabbath; which 'will yield more delight than all sensual pleasures can do. 'And the General Assembly beseech and exhort all magis- 'trates of burghs to be assistant to ministers in inquiring 'into and reforming such abuses.'

Ass. 1705, at Edinburgh, April 10. 'The General As- 'sembly, taking to their serious consideration the great 'profanation of the Lord's day, by multitudes of people 'vaguing idly upon the streets of the city of Edinburgh, pier 'and shore of Leith, in St. Ann's-yard, and the Queen's- 'park, and in diverse places about Edinburgh; and con- 'sidering the profanation of the Lord's day in other places 'by unnecessary travelling and otherwise; and the Gene- 'ral Assembly being deeply sensible of the great dishonour 'done to the holy God, and of the open contempt of God 'and man, manifested by such heaven-daring profaneness, 'to the exposing of the nation to the heaviest judgments; 'therefore they do, in the fear of God, earnestly exhort all 'their reverend brethren of the ministry, and other officers 'of the church, to contribute their utmost endeavours, in 'their stations, for suppressing such gross profanation of 'the Lord's day, by a vigorous and impartial, yet prudent 'exercise of the discipline of the church, and by holding 'hand to the execution of the laudable laws of the nation 'against the guilty, in such a way and manner as is allowed 'by law. And, because the concurrence and assistance of 'the civil government will be absolutely necessary for the 'better curbing and restraining of this crying sin, the Gen- 'eral Assembly do hereby appoint their commission to be 'nominate by them, to address the Right Honourable the 'Lords of her Majesty's privy council, that their Lordships 'may be pleased to give such orders, and take such courses, 'for restraining such abuses, as they in their wisdom shall 'judge most effectual.'

Ass. 1708, at Edinburgh, April 27. 'Forasmuch as min- 'isters from diverse parts of this national church do repre- 'sent, that there is a general profanation of the Lord's day 'by travelling thereupon, carrying goods, driving cattle, 'and other abuses, to the great scandal of religion, and man- 'ifest breach of many good laws; therefore the General As- 'sembly did, and hereby do appoint each presbytery with-

'in this church, to nominate two or three of their number, 'to attend the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary at their 'first circuit that falls to be in their bounds, and to repre-'sent to their Lordships the profanation of the Lord's day, 'by the aforesaid wicked and sinful practices: And the 'General Assembly do seriously recommend to the said 'Lords Justiciary, to take such effectual courses as they in 'their wisdom shall think fit, to restrain and punish the 'foresaid abuses; which the Assembly will acknowledge as 'a singular service done to God and his church. And they 'do in the mean time enjoin all the ministers of this church, 'from their pulpits, to advertise their people among whom 'such practices are, of the great hazard their immortal souls 'are in by such courses,' &c.

By all which we may clearly see what a high esteem our zealous and godly ancestors had of the Lord's day, and of what great importance they judged the due observation of this holy day is to the interest of true religion and godliness! And O what a pity is it, that we, who succeed them, should come so far short of them in zeal for sanctifying the Lord's day! O that all magistrates and ministers were animated to shew a due concern for the honour of this holy day, as in former times. A pleasant token would this be of the revival of decayed religion among us.

TREATISE

CONCERNING

THE SANCTIFICATION

OF THE

LORD'S DAY.

INTRODUCTION.

GOD, in his infinite goodness to fallen mankind, has been pleased to give us the Holy Bible. or canonical scripture, as a perfect rule of faith and manners; containing at large the great truths, duties, and concerns of the Christian religion. And these we have briefly comprised in three succinct compends, which are owned and received by all Christians; viz. *the Apostles' Creed*, as it is commonly called; *the Lord's Prayer;* and the *Decalogue:* the first being the sum of our *credenda*, the second of our *petenda*. and the third of our *facienda*.

The Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, which were solemnly delivered to the people of Israel from mount Sinai, do contain the moral law; being a fixed and perpetual rule of righteousness. which God hath given to be observed by all mankind, in all ages and periods, to the end of the world. This is that law which the royal psalmist so much admires and commends. and makes his chief subject in several psalms, particularly xix and cxix. which deserves our special notice, and high esteem in that respect.

The moral law differs vastly in its nature from that of a positive law. which commands or prohibits things that before were indifferent, and only become good or evil by the virtue of the command, and not otherwise. Such was that command to our first parents. concerning their eating of the tree of knowledge; such were the ceremonial, and many

LIBRARY
LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM

of the judicial laws, given to the Jews: these were binding only upon particular persons, and lasted but for a time. But the moral law, contained in the Decalogue, is of universal and perpetual obligation to every rational creature, and can never be abrogated, nor dispensed with; seeing it is evidently founded upon, and agreeable to the dictates of the light of nature, and the principles of sound reason, naturally engraven on man's heart.

This moral law God hath divided into *two* tables, Deut. v. 22. In the *first* table, we have the first *four* commandments, which immediately belong unto the honour of God, and instruct us in the duties we owe to him. In the *second* table, we have the last *six* commandments, which respect the welfare of our neighbours, and teach us our duty towards them.

As all God's works are very beautiful in their order, so are the Ten Commandments, which have their place and rank assigned them, according to the dignity of the duties commanded, and the heinousness of the sins forbidden. As for the first table, the order of its commands is admirable:—For the first command determines the right object of our worship; viz. the eternal and only true God. The second directs to the means of worship; viz. that they be only those of God's instituting, and not images, or means of our devising. The third appoints the manner of our worship; that it be with awful fear and reverence; without blaspheming, or profaning of his name. The fourth commandment specifies the right time or season to be employed in his solemn worship; viz. one day in seven, which is the subject of the ensuing treatise, the design whereof is to promote the religious observation of the Christian Sabbath, as the best means to revive religion when it falls under decay, and to maintain it in its life and power where it is.

Time is a jewel of inestimable worth, and upon the management of it depends the salvation of our immortal souls for ever; and therefore it can never be enough valued, nor too carefully improven. Time is a golden stream, continually running down by us out of one eternity into another; and yet its worth is seldom taken notice of until it is quite past away from us. How sadly do we verify that word of Solomon! Eccl. ix. 12. "Man knoweth not his own time."

But of all time, Sabbath-time is the most precious, and should be redeemed with the greatest care, as that upon which our salvation depends in a peculiar manner. It is the time in which the Holy Spirit is especially at work for convincing, converting, and edifying the souls of men: it is the time set apart by Infinite Wisdom for the happiness of the creature, and the glory of the Creator: and therefore it is the business of every one to inquire, how this time is to be improven aright. Now, for their encouragement and assistance in this matter, I propose to insist chiefly upon two heads: 1. To evince the morality of the Sabbath, and the divine appointment of the Lord's day. 2. Give directions how to sanctify it aright.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the morality of the Sabbath, and the divine appointment of the Lord's day.

In order to the handling of this subject the more clearly and methodically, I shall, through the divine assistance, propose and resolve several questions relative to it.

Quest. 1. *What is the proper signification and import of the name Sabbath, so commonly in use among us?*

Answer. The name Sabbath is a Hebrew word, signifying *rest*, the Sabbath being a day of holy rest: and it is so called, because God hath enjoined us to rest this day from our earthly work and labour, that we may solemnly call to mind his resting from his works, both of creation and redemption; publicly adore him therefore, solace our souls in his goodness, repose and rest in the arms of his mercy, and mediate upon that "eternal rest which remains for the people of God," in the other world.

This being the true import and meaning of the word Sabbath, we still retain it, and commonly use it to signify the Lord's day, our Christian Sabbath.

There are some indeed who are offended at the retaining of the name Sabbath, under the New Testament times, pretending that it is properly Jewish; though in the mean

time they are fond of the words priest and altar. which are much more so. But it is surely a mistake to say, that the name Sabbath is Jewish, or peculiar to the Jews, and so not to be used by Christians: for we see the Lord gives it that name in the moral law, which is of perpetual use, binding Christians as much as Jews: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." So it was not the Jews. but the great God that gave the Sabbath its name. Nay, Christ our Saviour doth, in the New Testament, call his own day by the name of Sabbath, Matt. xxiv. 20. "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath day." Now it is evident, that our Lord doth there mean the Christian Sabbath, or his own day; for he is not only speaking to Christians, but concerning the flight of Christians, which he knew was to fall out forty years after the Jewish Sabbath was abolished, and the Lord's day come into its place. Surely he would not bid Christians pray that their flight might not fall on the Jewish Sabbath, when he both forsaw, and intended, that then they would reckon themselves under no obligation to observe the Jewish Sabbath, nor under any restraint of fleeing or travelling on that day: (which even the Jews themselves believed at that time they might lawfully do in case of imminent hazard, as appears by the decree which they made relative thereto under the Hasmonians) and therefore he must mean the Christian Sabbath, upon which he bids Christians pray their flight may not happen. Not that it was unlawful for them to flee or travel on that day in time of danger, but because it would be a great addition to their trouble, if their flight should happen at such a time as to deprive them of the opportunity of God's worship and ordinances.

It is of no weight, what is objected by some, that the Christians. who lived in Judea among the Jews, could not be allowed by them to travel on their Sabbath, and therefore (say they) Christ bids them pray that their flight might not fall upon it. For, in the *first* place, The Jews not having the government then in their hands, they had no power of restraining or punishing of crimes. *2dly*, The time which Christ speaks of was a time of war and confusion. occasioned by the Roman armies invading the land, when no notice could be taken of such cases as travelling on the Sabbath. *3dly*, The most superstitious were

at that time put to flee and travel as well as the Christians, which they then thought it lawful to do, as we told before. *Fourthly.* If Christ had spoke so concerning the Jewish Sabbath, it had laid some foundation for Christians to fall into mistakes concerning the obligation of the Jewish Sabbath, and other ceremonies: which to be sure, our Lord would not have given them. And, if there had been any such occasion given, the Judaizing Christians would certainly have improven it against the apostles; which yet we do not find. *Lastly,* The learned Owen, Durham, Brown, and other writers on this subject, understand Christ as speaking in this place of the Christian sabbath.

But granting that the name Sabbath were indeed Jewish and improper (as some would have it,) yet I am sure it is still preferable to that of Sunday, which is truly heathenish, though commonly used by them in their liturgy, to the offence of many Christians: for it is well known that the heathen idolators called this day Sunday, because of their dedicating it to the created sun, which was the chief of their planetary gods they ordinarily worshipped, as may be gathered also from 2 Kings xxiii. 5. Ezek. viii. 16. And hence, some of the ancient heathens (of whom Tertullian speaks) fancied that the sun was the God of the Christians, because they celebrated the first day of the week.

I know it is objected, that some of the primitive apologists for Christianity, as Justin Martyr and Tertullian, in their writings, call the Lord's day Sunday. But the reason of their so doing is plain; they were writing to heathens, to whom the doctrines of Christianity and institution of the Lord's day were things new and strange, and who would not have known what day they meant, if they had spoken of the Lord's day; and therefore they call it by the name they gave it, Sunday: For when we treat with others, we must express things by the names that are common and current among them, unless we intend to be barbarians to them.

But the primitive Christians did not use to call it Sunday among themselves, but, commonly, the Lord's day, not the Sabbath; partly to distinguish it from the Jewish Sabbath that was so lately abolished, and partly to wean the Jewish converts the more effectually from Judaism. But

the true reason why some in this age seem to be offended at the word Sabbath, as being applied to the Lord's day, is, because they cannot allow of any thing that would infer an obligation upon them to keep such a strict holy rest upon the Christian Sabbath as the Jews did upon their Sabbath: but I will have occasion to speak of this afterwards.

I need not stand long here, to shew the different significations of the word Sabbath among the Jews: only in a word, beside the seventh day of each week, or weekly Sabbath (which is the most ordinary acceptation of the word in scripture.) it is put also sometimes to signify a whole week, because every week had a sabbath included in it, Lev. xxiii. 15. "Seven Sabbaths shall be complete," *i. e*, weeks. The Pharisee saith, Luke xviii. 12. "I fast twice a week;" orig. *neusteuo dis tou Sabbatou.* Likewise the word Sabbath is sometimes put to signify seven years.—Lev. xxv. 8. "Thou shalt number unto thee seven Sabbaths of years," *i. e.* (as it is there explained) seven times seven years. Seven years was called among the Jews, a Sabbath of years, because their land rested from culture or husbandry every seventh year, in answer to the church's resting every seventh day. Hence it is said, Lev. xxv. 4. "The seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land." Besides this, they had their great sabbatical year, or Jubilee, which was every fiftieth year: For according to Lev. xxv. 9. they were to reckon seven Sabbaths of years, or seven times seven years, which is forty-nine, and then to observe their Jubilee, or sabbatical year. *Lastly*, The other sacred feasts which the Jews kept monthly or annually, are also called Sabbaths, in regard of their resting from labour on these days, as on the weekly Sabbath. Hence Lev. xxiii. 24. the first day of the seventh month, which was their "feast of trumpets," is called a Sabbath: but the weekly Sabbath is commonly called in Scripture, by way of eminence, *the Sabbath;* to distinguish it from all other Sabbaths, and give it the preference to all the other feasts of the Jews.

Quest. II. *For what ends hath God appointed a weekly Sabbath?*

Answer 1. God hath appointed it for manifesting of his own glory, and particularly for displaying his sovereign power and authority over all his creatures. It must cer-

tainly be a high acknowledgment of God's universal dominion and supremacy, to have all the world every week, on one day, lay aside their own business, that they may jointly worship him in a public and solemn manner.

2. He appointed the Sabbath for the benefit of his creatures, and particularly in compassion to fallen man; for he saw that man's heart would be glued to the world, so drenched in sensuality, that, were he left to himself, he would not allow one day in a month, nay in a year, for divine worship; but would have drudged himself, his servants and beasts, even to death in pursuit of worldly things, without minding any thing that is better. Wherefore a merciful God hath strictly commanded man to rest one day every week, from all worldly concerns, that thereby he might, in a manner, be laid under a necessity to mind his soul and the things of another world; and, in the mean time, the poor toiled beasts, as well as men's bodies, might have some rest and ease, for their preservation and support.

But more particularly, the Sabbath is designed for our soul's eternal welfare; in regard,

1. The Sabbath tends highly to our instruction, and to the keeping up the lively impressions of the truths of Christianity in our memories. The Sabbath recurring every week, doth still of new lay before us a compendious view of these essential doctrines. *The creation of the world, man's fall, Christ's incarnation and satisfaction, his death, resurrection and victory, for completing our redemption:* besides that *glorious and eternal rest above,* provided for the people of God.

2. It tends to promote holiness, spirituality, and heavenly mindedness, in us; and that in two ways. 1. By calling us from temporal to spiritual employment. Sensual objects through the week are ready to alienate our affections from God, and wear spiritual things out of our minds; for recalling whereof, the Sabbath seasonably returns, and presents and entertains us with divine objects. 2. By affording us a lively emblem of heaven, and the conversation of the glorified saints, in celebrating that eternal Sabbath above. —For, as in heaven there is no buying, selling, nor any worldly business, but a continual speaking of God, enjoying communion with him, adoring and praising him for ever, without any mixture of other affairs: so the Lord will have an emblem or representation hereof, as near as may be,

given weekly to his people on earth, by the Sabbath, wherein they must lay aside all worldly things, and be wholly employed in the service of God, and work of heaven: and this is in order both to keep them in mind of, and make them meet for that inheritance of the saints in light.

Quest. III. *What is to be understood by the morality of the Sabbath, or fourth commandment, so frequently spoke of?*

Ans. When we call the Sabbath, or fourth commandment, *moral*, we mean that it is one of God's moral precepts, or a part of the *moral law*, *i. e.* the perpetual and unalterable rule given us by God, for regulating our life and manners: Also, by calling it *moral*, we distinguish it from the *ceremonial law*, which was binding for a time only, and abrogated by Christ's coming. The fourth commandment, enjoining the observation of the Sabbath, is not ceremonial, but moral; that is, it is not temporary, but of standing and perpetual obligation, and which binds all men, in all ages to the end of the world.

But, that we may have a more distinct apprehension of the morality of the Sabbath, we must distinguish betwixt things that are naturally moral, and things positively moral. *Moral natural* is, when the thing required is so founded upon, and authorised by, the law of nature and right reason, that it is fit and necessary to be done, though there had been no express command for it; such as worshipping God, obeying parents, abstaining from murder, &c. *Moral positive* is something enjoined us, which, tho' it be agreeable to the law of nature, yet carries not such a natural evidence in it, as to oblige us, without a divine revelation and express command: but, being once revealed and commanded, it is perpetually binding as well as that which is moral natural. Now, the fourth command is commonly called moral positive, though indeed there are several things in it, which are of natural equity, and authorised by the law of nature and sound reason; such as,

1. That there be a due part of our time stated and consecrated for the solemn worship and service of God, and particularly in public assemblies.

2. That this stated time or day should be universal,

and the same through all, that one man's business interfere not with another's devotions

3. That this day should recur in a due frequency, that it neither be so rare as to hinder our soul's good, or indispose us for the duties of it; nor so frequent, as to deprive us of opportunity for our necessary secular employments.

4. That the holy duties of this day be not marred or interrupted by wordly employments or diversions: in regard they tend naturally to draw off the mind from God and divine objects. These four things, included in the fourth commandment, I reckon to be of natural equity, or moral natural.

There are other things in it, which are of positive institution, *i. e.* binding only by a positive law, and express revelation. Of these again there is something,

1. That is positive moral, *i. e.* of perpetual and unalterable obligation, viz. that the foresaid stated time for God's solemn worship should be the seventh part of our time, or one day in seven. This, by God's law, is become perpetually moral and unalterable; but, if God had not revealed it to us, the law or light of nature could not have determined us to it, nor rendered any solid reason why the seventh rather than the fifth, sixth, or eighth part of onr time, should have been so consecrated to God: but the Author of nature, who best knows what proportion of time suits best both to men's bodies and spirits, and how oft it should recur, so as to answer best the exigencies both of our present and future life, hath wisely determined it to be a seventh part, or one day in seven: And can any man say but it is a most rational and fair determination? Had he dealt with us strictly, he might have taken the six days, and left us but one: but since he hath taken but one and allowed us six, we ought to acknowledge that the Lord hath dealt graciously and liberally with us. Nay, had it been referred to ourselves, could we have given less time than this to God, from whom we have all our time, nay, our very being, and all the good things we enjoy.

But, *2dly*, There is in the fourth commandment something that is positive ceremonial, or mutable, viz. The observation of the last day of the seven for the Sabbath. This indeed was enjoined at first, though not directly and

principally. as anywise essential to the command for the Sabbath: but only in a secondary way. as a circumstance of the command. which was to be altered when God pleased It belonged not to the substance of this command. or the great design of the law, in what end of the week the Sabbath should be, whether the first or last of the seven days should be consecrated for it: since the scope of the fourth commandment is only to bind us to consecrate the seventh part of our time, or one day in seven, to the Lord. This is the morality of the command, and what is of sacred and perpetual obligation in it. For, observe how the command runs, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy: —Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord." He saith not, "Remember the seventh day" to keep it holy, but, "Remember the Sabbath day," or "holy rest," whatever day it shall be appointed on. Take the six days for your labour, and let God have a seventh every week for his solemn worship; this is the design of the law: for when it is said, "The seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord," it is not precisely meant of the seventh in the order, but the seventh in number; not the seventh day after the creation, but the day following the six days allowed men to labour; that day is the Lord's, whatever day in the week it fall on. And though it be told in the end, that "God rested the seventh day," which indeed seems to be the seventh from the creation; yet it is said, "He blessed the Sabbath day," not the seventh day. So that it is plain, that, both in the beginning and end of the command, the Lord puts a remarkable difference betwixt the Sabbath, or day of holy rest, and the seventh day of the week, the day of his own rest; implying, that the scope of the command is to bind us to sanctify one day in seven, whatever seventh the Lord pleases to choose, whether it be the *first* or *last* day of the week; and that the observation of the seventh day from the creation, is to be distinguished from the standing law of the Sabbath. For "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is the fourth command, and would have bound us, though it had stont there, and said no more. Though yet I grant that the observation of the seventh or last day of the week for the Sabbath, is so enjoined by the fourth command, that none could have altered it from that day to another, but he that is Lord of the Sabbath.

Thus you see in what sense the fourth command is moral. and of unalterable obligation; and how it perpetually binds all Christians as well as Jews. to sanctify one day in seven for a weekly Sabbath unto the Lord. And now the day being changed by divine authority, from the *last* to the *first* day of the week (of which afterwards,) the substance, scope, or morality of the fourth command is nowise infringed; and it still retains its authority. and obligatory force as much as ever, binding Christians to sanctify the first day of the week, as much as it did the Jews to sanctify the last: Even as a law, commanding the keeping of an anniversary day for the Sovereign's birth. doth equally apply itself to the birth-day of each succeeding prince.

Quest. IV. *How may the morality of the Sabbath, or the perpetual obligation of the fourth command, be demonstrated against those who deny it?*

Ans. There are many reasons which prove that the fourth command is moral, binding us by a sacred and perpetual law, to keep holy one day in seven, to the end of the world; such as,

I. If the law for the Sabbath was given to man, and binding upon him in a state of innocency, before there was any ceremony or type of Christ instituted: (for then men did not need a Redeemer, nor any rite or type relative to him) then consequently this command was not ceremonial, nor abolished by Christ's coming, but is of moral and perpetual obligation: but the former is true; and therefore the latter. The consequence of the first proposition is certain, for the reasons mentioned; and also from this, that the Sabbath was appointed to Adam on a moral ground, which obliges all his posterity, viz. That he might have freedom and opportunity for the solemn worship of God, without any diversion from worldly things. For Adam, in his best estate, being but a finite creature, could not be intensely taken up with spiritual and temporal things both at once; his ordinary employment of dressing the garden, would in some measure have diverted his mind, that he could not wholly give himself to devotion. and the solemn worship of his Maker: wherefor God saw it fit he should have a day set apart, wherein he might have an uninterrupted freedom for it. Now, if Adam needed a Sabbath for the grounds above mentioned; much more do we need

one, who are not only finite creatures. but corrupt also; and have so little grace and strength for spiritual employments, and so many corruptions, temptations and allurements, to draw our hearts from God through the week, which he had not.

Philip Limbroch and other anti-sabbatarians. have no way to answer his argument. but by denying such an early institution of the Sabbath, and asserting, that it was not appointed till the time of Moses. when the ceremonies were instituted. But the contrary is evident from several texts.

1. From Gen. ii. 3. where we are told. before man's fall, or any word of it, that "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work." Now, the scripture notion of sanctifying any thing, is to separate and set it apart from common to sacred uses and purposes. And so it is plain from this text, that God from the beginning of the world, did sanctify and set apart one day in seven to be observed by all mankind, as a day of sacred rest, a day solemnly consecrated to his worship and service: and to lay a tie on us to observe it, we have God's example, of resting this day from all his work, set before our eyes. And seeing God from the beginning of the world had a church in it, who would certainly join together in performing public worship and service to him; they behoved to have set times for it, and consequently a Sabbath: And what day so fit for that purpose, as the day which God hath sanctified for sacred rest? That this was the ancient practice, may be inferred from Gen. iv. 3, 4. where we read of Cain and Abel bringing their offerings to the Lord, which was an instance of public worship. And ver. 3. it is said, *In process of time*, they brought offerings, &c. Now, these words, *In process of time*, may be as well rendered from the Hebrew, *At the end of days*, and so it is in the margin of bibles. Now, by *the end of days*, must be meant the period of working days, which we call a week: and so it was on the seventh day, when solemn worship was (according to divine institution) to be performed, that men brought their offerings to the Lord. That God's rest on this day was examplary to all mankind, appears from his taking six several days to perform his works of creation, and the distinct recording of each day's work, and his resting upon the seventh day. Certainly it had been

as easy for an Almighty power to have made the world in one day as in six. He that said, "Let there be light, let there be a firmament," and it was so, might, if he had pleased, as soon have said, *Let there be a world*, and it had been so. And why did he not? Surely for our instruction and imitation, that we in like manner should sanctify every seventh day of our time after six days labour. And this is given as the reason of the fourth command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;—for in six days God made heaven and earth," &c.

The anti-sabbatarians are much gravelled with the forecited text, Gen. ii. 3. And, to evade the force of it, contrary to all reason, they would allege that the blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day did not commence immediately from the creation, but only in the days of Moses, when the command was given for the Sabbath, Exod. xx. and that Moses only relates this in Gen. ii. by way of anticipation. But this opinion is contrary both to the text and context; for it is evident to every man that seriously reads them, that Moses relates the sanctification of the Sabbath, as a thing done by the Lord immediately on the back of the creation, and nowise as a thing done or to be done by him two thousand years thereafter; for as soon as he had said, that God ended his work and rested on the seventh day, he adds immediately in words of the same tense, "That God blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it" And if we compare this place with Exod. xx. 11. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it:" it is manifest, that there he brings in God's blessing and sanctifying of the Sabbath, not as an action then first done, but as that which God hath done long before, upon the creation of the world.

2. That this was done from the beginning, is further confirmed from Exod. xvi. 16. 22. 23.; from whence commentators justly observe, That the sanctification of the Sabbath was a thing well known to the Israelites, before it was enjoined them by Moses: otherwise there would be a strange abruptness in the introducing of that matter. For before ever there was any mention of the Sabbath, we find, ver. 22. that the Israelites of their own accord, gath-

ered two days provisions of manna on the sixth day of the week, reckoning that the gathering of manna was a servile work, not proper on the Sabbath. But the rulers taking notice of this practice, as done, not only without, but in appearance contrary to the orders given them, they bring the matter to Moses, that they might know his thought of it. Whence it appears that the rulers doubted if the people had done right, seeing Moses had commanded that every man should "gather it according to his eating, and lay up none till the next day," ver. 16, 19.; and so they might apprehend, that by virtue of this order they might lawfully gather it on the Sabbath also. But not being able to reconcile the seeming clashing of these two commands, of gathering manna every day, and resting on the seventh day, they come to Moses in a solemn manner, for direction in this straitening case. Accordingly, ver. 23. Moses gives them a resolution, and approves what the people had done, as agreeable to God's ancient law, concerning the Sabbath, Gen. ii. which now was to be renewed and confirmed. "To morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." He saith not to morrow shall be the rest, but to morrow is the rest; speaking of it as a thing well known to them. Now, if Moses had given them any previous direction about the keeping of the Sabbath, and gathering a double provision of manna, what was the need of all the rulers coming so solemnly to Moses, about this case? For, it is said, ver. 22. "That all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses." From all which it is clear, that the law for the Sabbath was extant. and the observation of it in use, before either the promulgation of the moral law at mount Sinai, or the giving of the ceremonial law, which was sometime afterwards.

3. The first words of the fourth commandment, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day," plainly insinuate the renovation of an old command, and not the enacting of a new one. It is highly probable, that the observation of this ancient law had been greatly neglected for many years before, while the Israelites were in bondage in Egypt. and obliged to sore labour every day by their task-masters, and so not suffered to keep the Sabbath as before. Hereby, no doubt, the impressions of the duty of keeping it might be much worn off the minds of many; though the memory of the Sabbath was not quite lost, as appears from the peo-

ple's gathering double manna on the sixth day of the week without direction. But, that they might guard against neglecting or forgetting the law for the Sabbath in time coming, the Lord renews the command with a solemn *memento*, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day."

4. Though Moses makes no express mention of the patriarchs' observing of the Sabbath, it is no wonder; in regard he writes the history of some thousands of years after the creation in very small bounds; wherein many things relating to the church in that period must certainly be omitted: for the account which Moses gives of those early times, is only designed for an introduction to his history of the deliverance, erection, and polity of the nation of the Jews, God's peculiar people, and the only visible church he then had upon the earth. Nevertheless, we have no reason to call in question the patriarchs' observation of the Sabbath from the beginning of the world; but good ground to believe they did it, if we consider the eminent piety of some of them, together with their long lives, by reason whereof it was very easy to hand down the institution of the Sabbath, with others of God's revelations, from Adam to Abraham's days. For Adam's life reached to Mathusalem's time; Mathusalem's life reached to Shem's time; and Shem's life reached to Abraham. And, being religious men, they would not fail to teach and recommend God's statutes to one another; And as for Abraham, the father of the faithful, we read expressly of his commanding his children to keep these statutes, Gen xviii. 19.; and without doubt, he enjoined the keeping of the Sabbath among the rest. And, though it be not mentioned in so many words, that is no argument against the thing; for we read not of the church's observing of the Sabbath all the time of the Judges, which was near five hundred years; yet there is no ground to question but they kept it all that time.

Several things might be added, which make it highly probable, that the institution of the Sabbath was handed down by tradition from Adam to his posterity, through all the world. What reason else can be given of Noah's observing the revolution of seven days while in the ark?—(Gen. viii. 10, 12.) where we see him once and again waiting the fall of the waters by sevens. He still did let the seventh day or Sabbath be over, before he sent out the next

messenger: wisely reckoning, that upon his suitable observation of the Lord's Sabbath, he might look for the more agreeable news to be brought him. What reason else can be given for the heathen's dividing of their time into weeks, and their weeks into seven days, and their constant holding the septenary number as sacred? Yea, (as Clemens Alexandrinus tells us) the seventh day of the week was still held sacred by the Greeks. All this certainly was conveyed to them by tradition from Adam and Noah, their forefathers; and not learned, to be sure, from the Jews, against whose customs and religion they had such rooted prejudices.

II. A second argument for the morality of the fourth command, may be drawn from the situation of it. We find this command placed in the midst of the Decalogue, or those moral precepts which God hath delivered to the world, as a perpetual rule of their lives. And is it any way probable, that God would place a ceremonial law, or temporary precept, in the very midst of them? As it is certain that the moral precepts have the preference to the ceremonial in many things; so it is as sure that the fourth command, or the sacred observation of one day in seven, hath an equal share with the other nine, in all the dignity and privileges of the moral law. For,

In the first place, This fourth command, as well as the rest, was spoke immediately by the voice of God, in the hearing of all the people; whereas the other laws, ceremonial or judicial, were only given unto Moses, and by him declared unto the people.

2. This command, as well as the rest of the Decalogue, was written by the finger of God; nay, twice written by him on tables of stone: whereby the Lord intended to teach us its fixed continuance and lasting obligation; and that by his spirit he would have this law written in the fleshly tables of his people's hearts, never to be obliterated. But this was not done with the ceremonial laws, which were only delivered verbally to Moses, and written by him from God's mouth.

3. This command was put and preserved with the rest of the moral law in the ark: whereas the law of ceremonial ordinances was placed in a book without on the side of the ark, and which might be separated from the ark. The mo-

ral precepts were laid up within the ark of the covenant, as a sign of their excellency and perpetuity, and of their being inseparable from Christ and his covenant (of whom the ark was a famous type); therefore said Christ, Psal. xl. 8. "Thy law is within my heart:" But the ceremonial precepts being without the ark of the covenant, was a token they were separable from it, and to be abolished by Jesus Christ when the appointed time should come. And if the law of the Sabbath had been of this nature, to be sure it had been placed on the side of the ark, with the other ceremonial laws, and not lodged within it, together with the moral precepts, which were perpetual and unalterable. Moreover, if situation in the Decalogue, among the moral precepts, which were laid up in the ark, be a good argument for the morality of the second command, against the Papists, as it is improven against them by Protestant divines, there can be no reason why the same argument should not be fully as conclusive for the fourth command against the anti-sabbatarians.

III. A third argument for the morality of the fourth command, may be this:—The reasons and grounds of this command are, in their nature, moral and perpetual, and as forcible upon Christians as Jews; consequently the command itself must be moral also.

The reasons included in the fourth command are various. 1. One reason, enforcing the sanctification of the Sabbath, is taken from the propriety of the day, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;" it is the Lord's day, and the "holy of the Lord." Isa. lviii. 13. the day which the Lord hath reserved for himself and his use, and therefore must be entirely dedicated to him; no man may encroach upon this consecrated time, without the guilt of sacrilege. And doth not this reason bind us as much as the Jews? Have we any power to alienate from God, what is his property, more than they had?

2. Another reason is taken from the equity, and rationality of this precept. God is good and liberal to us, in giving us six days for our works: wherefore it is highly reasonable and just, that we should give him one day for his worship. It aggravated David's sin that he took the poor man's darling ewe-lamb, when he had a whole flock of his own, as it did our first parents' fault in pulling the

fruit of one tree that God had reserved, when he gave them all the rest of the trees at their will: so it heightens our crime, if we rob God of his one day, when he gives us no less than six to ourselves. Moreover, it is highly reasonable and fit, when our dying bodies have six days for their necessities and occasions, that our immortal souls should have one for theirs. Now, doth not the equity and justice of this command affect and oblige us as much as it doth the Jews?

3. A third reason is taken from the charitableness of this law; viz. That our bodies and cattle should have a day allowed them for rest. Charity saith, that they should have some ease and relaxation from sore labour, and not be wearied out with continual toil: and is not this as needful now as it was of old among the Jews?

4. Another reason is drawn from God's example, which is a rule to us: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." Here we have a twofold example, both of God's resting and working; and they are both set before us for our imitation. As God employed six days in the works of creation; so we are to make use of six days in the works of our lawful calling: And as he ceased from his works, and rested on the seventh day; so we are bound to imitate him in that respect, by quitting our weekly labours, and sanctifying of the Sabbath day. Now, can there any reason be given, why we are not as much bound to follow God's example, in resting one day after six days labour, as the Jews were?

A fifth is taken from the blest advantages of it; it is a blest day to them that keep it. And is not God as able and willing to bless the Sabbath to us now as he was of old? And, do not we need his blessing as much as the Jews?

Now, if these arguments be moral, perpetual, and obligatory to us, as much as to the Jews; the command that is enforced by them must be so likewise.

IV. A fourth argument may be taken from the special marks of honour and respect that God puts on this command. It is not only engraven in tables of stone by the immediate finger of God, as all the rest, but it is privileged above them, in several respects.

1. It is placed in the first table of the law, and thereby preferable to those of the second table.

2. It is situated in the midst of the Decalogue, in the close of the first table, and before the front of the second table; thereby teaching us, that the observation of both tables much depends on the right keeping of this one command. God hath placed it in the heart of the Ten Commands; because the keeping of it gives life to the keeping of all the rest. The sanctification of the Sabbath is an epitome of all religion; it virtually includes all the commands, and strongly engages men to keep them all. Hence it was, when the Israelites broke the fourth commandment by gathering of manna, that the Lord charges them with breaking all the commands, Exod. xvii. 28. "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" Why so? Because he that makes no conscience of keeping the Sabbath, will not much stick to break any of the rest.

3. It hath a solemn *memento* prefixed to it, which the rest have not: God ushers it in with a *remember*, which is very emphatic, and is as if he had said. "Keep this command always in your minds: forget what you will, forget not this." God speaks as a master that hath some special affair, among many others, to recommend to his servant: Among all other injunctions, he bids him particularly remember such an affair; thereby shewing a special concern for it, more than the rest.

4. It is delivered both positively and negatively: All the rest of the commands are delivered only one of the ways, but this is both ways. It is not only said positively. "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy;" but also negatively, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work," &c.

5. The Lord presseth obedience to this command, with more reasons and arguments than any of the rest, which were enumerated before. And this he doth because he knew the conscientious observing of this command would engage us to make conscience of all the rest, and because he foresaw wicked men would attack it, and reason against it more than any of the rest. Now, is it probable that God would shew such a concern for a ceremonial law, that he would place it in the middle of the moral precepts, and press it with more reason and arguments than any of them?

6. He makes the keeping of this command, and sanctifying of the Sabbath, one special end of man's creation; because therein God is highly glorified. The Jewish Talmund propounds the question, "Why God made man on the evening before the Sabbath?" and gives this one reason, that man might forthwith enter upon the observation of the command to keep the Sabbath, and begin his life with the worship of God, which was the chief end why it was given him, as if the keeping the Sabbath were the great end of his creation. And, indeed there is solid reason for this assertion, if we consider, that as the end of the Sabbath day is to commemorate God's glorious works, and celebrate his praises for the same, so the chief end and design of man, whom God made on the sixth day, as his last and most consummate work of all, was, that he might be the tongue of the whole creation, to trumpet forth his praises for all the rest of his works. And accordingly just on the back of his creation, he entered upon the keeping of a Sabbath for that very end. So it may well be said, that God made man chiefly for this end, to keep the Sabbath day.

7. The Lord entails many special blessings upon the keeping of this command, and denounces many sad threatenings against the breaking of it. Read the 56th chapter of Isaiah throughout, where the Lord not only pronounceth him blessed that keeps the Sabbath, but promises to "give him a place and a name better than of sons and daughters," to fill his heart with "spiritual joy," to give him a "spirit of prayer," and to "hear his prayer" —God will both give him ability to serve him, and then accept and reward his service when it is done. Also, read Isa. lviii. 14. Jer. xvii. 24. where blessings, both spiritual and temporal, peace, wealth, plenty and prosperity, are promised to such as keep the Sabbath. On the other hand, how terrible are the plagues he threatens against a land or people for breaking this command! Read Jer. xvii. 27. Ezek. xx. 21. to 26.

8. He hath severely punished sinners for the breach of this command, as if it were the sum of his whole service. He caused a man to be put to a cruel death for "gathering sticks on the Sabbath," Num. xv. The offence might be thought small, but God looks on the contempt of the Sab-

bath as an affront to the Creator who instituted it, and to whose honour it was dedicated, and an incursion upon the whole law, about which God appointed the Sabbath for a hedge. It was the slighting of the Lord's Sabbath that caused Jerusulem to he burnt with fire, Jer. xvii. *ult.* Many instances of judgments against Sabbath-breakers might also be brought from human histories.

V. A fifth argument may be taken from the prophecies of the Old Testament. We find Isaiah, that evangelical prophet, pronouncing a blessing on those that should keep the Sabbath, even in evangelical times, Isa.lvi. 1, 2. "Thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed, Blessed is the man that doth this.——that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it." That is a plain prophecy of Christ; yet, in his times he declares them blessed who should keep the Sabbath: yea, ver. 6. he puts "the keeping of the Sabbath" in a manner for the whole duties of the covenant. That this evangelical prophet is speaking there of the New Testament times, there is no ground left to doubt; for he is speaking of the time when the stranger and eunuch should be joined to the Lord, and when there should be no distinction of persons, Jews or Gentiles, but both should be alike welcome to God and his ordinances: and yet, in these times, there are many blessings promised to them that should keep the Sabbath; which demonstrates it to be a moral and perpetually binding duty.

VI. Christ himself plainly tells us, "That he came not to destroy (or abrogate any part of it) the moral law, but to fulfil it," severely threatening those who would seek to invalidate the obligation of the least of these commands, Matt. v. 17, 18, 19. and, in confirmation hereof, he bids Christians "pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath day," Matth. xxiv. 10. Now, the flight he there speaks of, was to happen in Vespasian's time, about forty years after that all ceremonies were abolished, together with the Jewish Sabbath, as I shewed before; and yet we see Christ plainly enough homologates the morality and perpetual obligation of the law for the Sabbath, under the New Testament: for he still supposes that a Sabbath would be in being, and in force, after all the ceremonies

were abolished, and therefore he warns his disciples, and in them all Christians to the end of the world, to make it a petition in their prayers upon any approaching calamity, to be delivered from the necessity of fleeing upon the day when the duties of the Sabbath should be observed: Seeing it is no small aggravation of our distress to be forced to flee and travel on God's holy day, when we should be employed in attending the solemn ordinances of his worship, and enjoying communion with God therein.

VII. A seventh argument may be taken from the absurdities that would follow upon the denying the morality of this command. For then, 1. There would be but nine commands in the moral law, which is directly contrary to scripture: for we are told that there are ten in it, Deut. x. 4. "And he wrote on the tables according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spake out of the midst of the fire," &c.

2. It would open a door for atheism and immorality, and tend to cast loose the whole moral law: For if we yield that the fourth commandment is not moral, but ceremonial; why may not some, in the next place, rise up and say, the second and fifth are not moral either? and so on concerning the rest. But the Lord, having written the whole moral law on tables of stone, and the fourth command in midst thereof, doth teach us thereby, that the whole of it should be indelibly written in our hearts, and that the obligation of it, and of this command among the rest, can never be extinguished.

Lastly, The universal church have still held the commandment of the Sabbath to be moral, and of perpetual obligation, and that the seventh day of our time should be consecrated unto the Lord. The constant practice of all true Christians, since the apostles' time, in observing a weekly sabbath, is a great confirmation of this truth; especially if we consider, that the judgment and practice of the catholic church have been so uniform, constant, and uninterrupted in this matter, that we do not find so much as one heretick or person of any sort in ancient times, that ever presumed to oppose or contradict this doctrine.

And as the foresaid universal consent evidenceth this truth or law to be of divine institution, so it proves it to be a dictate of the law of nature and sound reason, that one

day of the week should be dedicated to the worship and service of God. Yea, so strong is the light hereof, that those who have apostatized from the true religion, and have taken up with the vilest of superstitions, have still found it necessary to fix upon a certain day of the week, for the performing of solemn worship; and so the Mahometans have chosen Friday for this end, and the Parthians observed Tuesday; for it is evident to every rational man, that the religious observation of a weekly Sabbath is the greatest preservative of a solemn profession of religion in the world. Take away from among men all conscience of observing a stated day of sacred rest to God for the celebration of his worship in assemblies, and all religion will quickly decay, if not come to nothing in the world. And it is to be observed, that wherever religion flourisheth in the power of it, there we find most conscience made in the observation of the Sabbath.

Quest. V. *If the fourth commandment be moral and perpetual; how then could the Sabbath be changed from the last to the first day of the week, as we see it done?*

Ans. The precise day of the week for the Sabbath not being of the essence of the fourth commandment, but only an alterable circumstance in it, the actual alteration thereof under the New Testament, makes no more against the morality of the fourth command, than the change of the outward ordinances and means of worship under the gospel, makes against the morality of the second command. That the keeping of the precise seventh day of the week is distinct from the scope and substance of the fourth command, which is only to institute one day in seven for the Sabbath, is pretty evident from the command itself, both in the first and last words of it. The first words, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," do contain the whole substance of the command: the last words, "Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it," do contain the formal reason of the command: and in neither of these is the seventh day of the week spoken of; which notifies to us, that the observation of that precise day is not essential to the moral and standing law of the Sabbath, but separable from it. If it be said, that the command enforceth the observation of this day, from God's example in resting upon it; I answer, that a seventh day's rest after six days

labour, is all the conformity which the fourth command requires of us to the example of God, *i. e.* any seventh day which he pleaseth to appoint.

Moreover, our natural reason argueth for what is above asserted. For though the Jews who lived in the land of Palestine, might possibly have observed the precise seventh day from the creation; yet the joint observation of that precise time was impossible to all others whom the fourth command doth concern, because of the difference of the climate where they live, which makes it night to many of them, when it was day to the Jews. Again, the computation of our time by weeks, consisting of seven days, each of twenty four hours length, was so interrupted in the times of Joshua and Hezekiah, by the prodigious lengthening out of some days, that I cannot see how the precise seventh day could possibly be moral, or perpetually binding. From all which I infer, that the change of the day, by instituting the Lord's day, or first day Sabbath, in the room of the seventh day Sabbath, doth no ways repeal or infringe the morality and substance of the fourth commandment.

Several proper questions may be moved upon this head.

Quest. 1. By what authority came the day for the Sabbath to be changed? *Ans.* By the same authority that first appointed the Sabbath, I mean that of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true God, "the Lord of the Sabbath," and sovereign head of his church.

There are indeed some differences among divines about this matter; *some* holding this change to have been made immediately by Christ himself; *others*, that it was made by the apostles. But both opinions come to one thing, and equally establish the divine authority of the Lord's day; seeing the apostles were divinely inspired, and infallibly guided by Christ's spirit, in their ecclesiastical determinations, delivering nothing to be constantly observed in God's worship, but what they had the Lord's authority for, according to 1 Cor. xi 23.

Athanasius plainly affirms, that the change was made by the Lord himself: and indeed it is more than probable, that during Christ's forty day's stay on earth after his resurrection, wherein he continued instructing his disciples of the things relating to the gospel-church. "and giving his commandments to his apostles," Acts i. 2, 3. he, among

other things, appointed this change, leaving it upon his apostles to make promulgation of it to the world after his ascension, and especially at Pentecost, at the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit on that day, whereby he publicly confirmed this change.

When the sacred penman of the book of the Acts tells us, that Christ continued for so many days space after his resurrection, to speak to his apostles "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," *i. e.* the gospel church; he surely hath a special respect to the instructions he gave them concerning the ordinances and institutions of the Christian church. And as he instructed them how they should change the carnal sacrifices of beasts into the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, the sacrament of circumcision into that of baptism, and the sacrament of the passover into that of the Lord's supper; so likewise he instructed them how to change the seventh day Sabbath into that of the Lord's day. All the primitive fathers are very positive concerning the divine authority of this change.—Ignatius, who lived in the first century, saith (in his Epist.) concerning the Lord's day. 'Omnis Christi amator 'dominicum celebrat diem, reginam et principem dierum 'omnium.' August. Serm. 151 *de tempore* saith, 'Dominicum diem apostoli religiosa solemnitate habendum, sanxerunt, quia, in eodem Redemptor noster a mortuis resurrexerit, quique ideo Dominicus appellatur.'

Quest. 2. If it be asked, What was the necessity of this change? I answer it was necessary,

1. To manifest Christ's glory and equality with the Father; for Christ saith, "That men shall honour the Son, as they honour the Father," John v. 23. Wherefore, as they honoured the Father with a Sabbath, upon account of his rest from creation; so it was fit they should honour the Son with a Sabbath, upon account of his rest from redemption, which was a far more glorious work: and, therefore, in honour of the Son, the Christian Sabbath is, by the Spirit of God called the Lord's day.

2. The change of the day was necessary to manifest Christ's headship over his church, and that he is the sovereign Lord over his own house, worship and ordinances; and particularly, that he is "Lord of the Sabbath," which

title he had assumed before in Mark ii. 28. And accordingly he would have this convincingly displayed to the world, by shewing that he was able to change the day of solemn worship.

3. Since he hath thought fit to appoint a new manner of his worship, it was meet to appoint a new time of it also. The levitical service and ceremonial worship of the Sabbath day being changed, it was proper the day of the Sabbath should be changed also, to shew the more clearly the expiration of that worship, and to induce the Jews the more easily to lay it aside, and keep Christians the more from judaizing.

4. There were some things in the observation of the seventh day Sabbath peculiar to the Israelites, that belonged properly to that nation, and not to others. As, 1. God designed it to be a signal or mark for distinguishing that people from the rest of the world; therefore he calls the keeping of this day, "a sign betwixt him and the children of Israel, throughout their generations." Exod. xxxi. 13. 17. *i. e.* a sign they were God's covenanted people, a nation that stood in a peculiar relation to God, above all others in the world. But this relation coming at length to be altered, it was fit the sign should also be changed. 2. When God revived the institution of the Sabbath to the Jewish nation, he enjoined them to keep it in memory of their deliverance from Egypt, as well as the creation of the world; for it is very observable in Deut. v. when Moses called the Israelites together in a solemn manner, to put them in mind of the covenant God had made with them in Horeb, he repeats the Ten Commandments to them: but, in repeating of the fourth, he leaves out the argument for keeping the Sabbath, taken from God's creating of the world in six days, and resting the seventh—and in the room of it, puts in their miraculous deliverance from Egypt: for, in the close of the fourth command, he says, Deut. v. 15. "Remember that thou wast a servant, in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm; therefore. the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." And hence some think, that it was not precisely the seventh day from the creation that was appointed for the Jewish Sabbath, but the seventh day from their deliverance from Egypt. *Lastly.*

This day was also appointed them for to call to mind their wonderful deliverance at the Red sea, which several learned writers are of opinion was wrought for them on the morning of the Jewish Sabbath, and seems very probable from Exod. xii. 15, 16, 17.; and hence they are enjoined to rest, and cease from their labour on this day, in remembrance of their being miraculously rescued on it from Egypt, and of their resting from the cruel bondage thereof, From all which it appears, that there was something in this commandment peculiar to the Jewish nation, and which belonged not to others. And whence I may well infer that if the deliverance by Moses, from Egypt and the Red Sea, was a good reason for the Sabbath of the Jews, surely the eternal redemption by Christ, from sin and hell, is a much stronger and better reason for the Sabbath of the Christians.

5. In the command for the seventh day Sabbath there were some things typical and mystical, peculiar to the Old Testament times, and which were to be fulfilled in the Messiah, and gospel times; and therefore to be abolished.

1. The seventh day Sabbath represented Christ, who is the only rest, centre, and satisfaction of our souls: therefore the apostle tells us, Col. ii. 17. That the Sabbath "was a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." *i. e.* He is the substance which this shadow or type represented.

2. It signified the great Sabbath of the New Testament, or the happy times of the gospel, wherein the faithful were to rest from the servile rites and burdensome ceremonies of the law.

3. The seventh day Sabbath being a "shadow of things to come," typified the believer's rest and deliverance by Jesus Christ from the bondage of sin, and being brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

4. The Jewish Sabbath, with its ceremonial and typical worship under the law, shadowed forth the Christian Sabbath, with its pure and spiritual worship under the gospel, and so is expired.

5. The rest of the Seventh day Sabbath was a type and shadow of Christ's resting upon that day in the grave, and therefore could not be continued after his resurrection, more than any of the other types fulfilled in Christ. Our Saviour, by choosing to lie buried throughout this day in

the grave, did thereby bury the Jewish seventh day Sabbath with the rest of their types and shadows. Hence it is that the apostle Paul, Col. ii. 16, 17. doth expressly number the Sabbath among the Old Testament shadows, that ceased upon their being accomplished in Christ the substance and antitype, who came in place of all the legal shadows. Now, it being evident from the foresaid text, that the Jewish Sabbath was abrogated by Christ's death and resurrection, it is necessary to believe that either Christ, by himself or his apostles, did appoint another day in lieu thereof, for the solemn worship of God; otherwise the state of the Christian church under the New Testament would be far worse than that of the Jews under the Old, which is absurd.

6. The two ages before and after Christ, are reckoned as two diverse worlds, Heb. ii. 5.; wherefore as, when the first world was made by creation, there was a day set apart in memory thereof; so, when the world was renewed by redemption, it was fit there should be a day kept in honour and memory of that great work. For, if the perfecting the work of the first creation deserved to have a day set apart for celebrating the power and glory of the Author, much more doth the finishing the new creation, or restoration of the world, deserve a day to be consecrated for the commemoration of that, in regard the glorious attributes of God do shine far more brightly in this than in the other.

Quest. 3. If it be asked, Why was the Sabbath changed to the first day of the week?

I answer, for many reasons.

I. The great reason given for observing the last day of the week, doth plead more strongly now for the observation of the first day of the week. The reason for observing the seventh day was, because the Lord rested that day from the great work he had made, viz. of creation, which ought to be remembered with thankfulness and praise. Now, when God gave the Ten Commandments, there was no greater work in the world than the creation; and therefore it was fit that the day of God's rest from his greatest work should be the Sabbath, or day of rest to the world. But, should God thereafter work a greater work than creating heaven and earth; then, by parity of reason, and even by virtue of the fourth commandment, the day

of God's rest from that should be the Sabbath of the world. Now, the work of redemption, which the Lord perfected. and rested from on the first day of the week, is far greater than the work of creation: it doth even eclipse and swallow it up, as the temple did the tabernacle. It is far more valued and esteemed by God the Author, and ought to be far more regarded and remembered by us on many accounts.

1. In regard, that in the world's redemption there is a far more glorious display of the divine attributes, God's power, wisdom, justice, goodness, &c. than in the world's creation.

2. It is much more for our benefit and comfort than the work of creation. We could have had no comfort in this without the other; for the whole creation groaned under the burden of sin, and, by reason thereof, all the creatures were at enmity with us. Without redemption, what pleasure can we take in our creation, since by it we are made capable only of everlasting misery and destruction? Alas! there are no comforts in being creatures, if we be not made new creatures; and there is no doing of that, but by this new and glorious method.

3. In regard the second creation was a work of far greater difficulty and expense than the first. The first was finished by the word of his mouth, but the second could not be perfected but by the blood and death of his dear Son. The first was finished in six days; but it cost the Son of God above thirty-three years painful travail and suffering in the world, to effectuate the second. In the first there was no opposition; for, since the world was made out of nothing, there was nothing to make resistance to the Creator: but in the second creation or redemption of the world, there was a formidable opposition made by justice, men, and devils. It was wonderful for the glorious fabric of heaven and earth to be made out of nothing; but much more for the Maker of all things to be made of a woman, Jesus Christ to be born of his own creature. In the first creation God made us like himself; but here the Lord makes himself like us. The glorious Creator is made a creature; yea, made sin, made a curse, to save man, his sinful creature, from the curse. We may indeed say, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made;" but much

more are we fearfully and wonderfully redeemed. Creation was the work of God's fingers, Psal. viii. 3. but redemption the work of his arm, Luke i. 51. We use the strength of the arm to effectuate what the fingers cannot do. So that we see it is a far greater work and miracle to bring us back from hell, than to bring us from nothing: to make us saints, than to make us men and women. Well, then, if God's resting from his work of creation on the seventh day, determined mankind to keep this day for a Sabbath in a thankful remembrance thereof; much more should God incarnate's raising a new world at a far greater charge, and resting from his labour of love on the first day of the week, determine us to observe that day for a Sabbath, in an adoring remembrance of his infinite glory and goodness displayed in this stupendous work.

4. The Lord himself delights and rejoices much more in the new creation than in the old, his glory being more conspicuous by the one than by the other; and that which is esteemed and preferred by him, ought to be so by us. The Lord indeed took pleasure in the review of his works in the first creation, when he at first rested from the same; but these being afterwards all corrupted and deformed by sin, his complacency therein was exceedingly diminished. Hence, Gen. vi. it is said, "It repented him he had made man." Wherefore it was proper and necessary to transfer the Sabbath to the day of the world's new creation or restoration, effected and completed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the world's Redeemer; in which day the Lord rested from these his more glorious works, delighting himself in the review thereof with an everlasting complacency.

Lastly, To confirm what is said, let it be observed, that God so far preferred the work of redemption to that of creation, that he changed the beginning of the year (as Dr. Lightfoot remarks on Exod. xiii.) from the time of the world's creation, to the time of the passover and the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt by Moses, as being an eminent type of our redemption from sin and hell by Jesus Christ. We have reason to believe, that from the creation of the world, the year began in September, at the time of the autumnal equinox; for we find that the fruits were on the trees at the creation, Gen. i. 12. But when God instituted the first passover which immediately ushered in the Israelites' de-

liverance from Egypt, which was in March, at the vernal equinox, he changed the beginning of the year, and ordered it to commence from that time, Exod. xii. 2.—"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you." Now, if the beginning of the year was changed upon the account of the type, a day might well be changed upon the account of the antitype. If the month of the figurative redemption was so remarkable, that the month of the world's creation must give place to it; then surely the substance itself, when it appeared, might well be the cause of the change of a day, and the seventh day of the creation give place to the first day of the finishing of our redemption.

II. Since there was a necessity of changing the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week, as is already proven; it could be into no other day so fitly as the first day of the week, on several accounts:

1. Because of its answering the intent of the command better than another day. For if the Sabbath had been changed into the second, third, fourth, or any other day of the week than the first, the morality of the fourth command had been infringed; for so God would not have had one day, and man six working days together of one and the same week; as the command requires. But now it holds in a constant course; God hath his one day, and we our six together in one and the same week; as it was from the beginning. And by this wise alteration, there was never a week without a Sabbath, and never a week had two Sabbaths. For as the week ended with the Jewish Sabbath, so the next week began with the Christian Sabbath; which could not have been, if any other seventh day had been chosen.

2. Since there behoved to be a change, it was very agreeable to reason to begin the week with God, and that our Creator and Benefactor should be first served, and have his portion of the week assigned to him in the first place, that his worship might have the preference to our labour; and also, that our consecrating the first fruits of the week to God, might in a manner sanctify the whole, obtain his blessing on the week's labour, and make all our works therein the more acceptable to him.

3. The first day of the week is the fittest for keeping up

the memory both of the first and second creation of the world. For it being a day of rest always succeeding our six days labour, puts us in mind of God's finishing the works of creation in six days space, and resting the seventh. And especially, it being the first day of the week, serves to mind us of the beginning of the world, and of its first creation; seeing it was on this day that God began his glorious work, saying, "Let there be light." But in a special manner, this day serves to perpetuate the memorial of his greater blessing, of the world's new creation or redemption by Jesus Christ; since on it he finished this work by his resurrection. It was on this day that not only that temporal and perishable light did first shine at the first creation;—but also that eternal and heavenly light brake out in meridian splendour, the Son of righteousness arose from a dark grave, and shined on a dark world, and brought light, life, peace, healing, and all mercies under his wings.

4. It is the fittest day for celebrating the honour and memory of all the persons of the glorious Trinity.—For though Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, be honoured by this day in a peculiar manner, upon account of his glorious rest this day from the work of redemption; yet the Father and Holy Ghost are this day remarkably honoured also. The Father did not only begin this day to create, but he was the glorious contriver of our happiness, and sent his Son to carry on that blessed work of redemption, which was this day happily completed. Also, the Holy Ghost is honoured by observing this day, since he gloriously descended at Pentecost on this day, for fitting and furnishing the apostles for the work of the gospel: And he is the blessed Applier of the redemption finished this day by Jesus Christ, and is in a more especial manner at work this day, in making saving application of it unto elect souls, by the preaching of the gospel.

III. The Sabbath is changed to the first day of the week, because it is the most honourable and glorious day to Christ and his church, that ever dawned upon the world, the most honourable day to our Redeemer, and the most joyful to the redeemed; and therefore ought to be kept in perpetual remembrance.

Hence, by the Spirit of God, and ever since Christ's resurrection upon this day, it is called the Lord's day, it be-

ing the most glorious day ever he had. It was in an eminent manner his birth-day, for in it he was born from the dead: in it God solemnly owned him to be his only begotten Son. Hence that word in Psal. ii. "Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee," is applied to the day of his resurrection, Acts xiii. 13. "He was this day declared to be the Son of God with power," Rom. 1. 4. For, at his rising, he made the earth to shake, the graves to open, the stones to roll away, the dead to rise and appear, the soldiers to tremble and flee, and both saints and angels to come and attend him. And was not this a triumphant day to him? Yea, on this day he conquered the grave, death and hell, and shewed himself to be the Captain of our salvation, triumphing over his and our enemies. His birth and death did shew him to be truly man, but his resurrection did manifest him to be truly God, and the great Redeemer of the world. Hereby he gave full proof, that he had completely finished the work of Redemption, paid the elect's debt, satisfied divine justice, cancelled our bond and obtained an ample discharge, since he, as our great Cautioner, was now let out of prison. Was not this then a joyful day, a day to be had in everlasting remembrance? The day our Jonah came safe out of the whale's belly; the day our Sampson carried away the gates of Gaza. Now it was that death lost its sting; now the grave and hell lost their purchase; now the serpent's head was bruised; now were they all swallowed up in victory; now it was that our glorious Redeemer rested from all the works of suffering and redemption, and rejoiced in the review thereof, with infinite complacency. And ought not we, who are so much concerned, cheerfully to rest this day with Christ, in a thankful remembrance of all he has done.

IV. This day was prophesied of long before, Psal. cxviii. 24 "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." The current of expositors understand this day of our Christian Sabbath, and of Christ's resurrection thereon: for here plainly there is a prophecy of Christ, and of a remarkable day whereat the world should wonder, and the church rejoice. "This is the day which the Lord hath made," *i. e.* of which God is author. He made it, not by creation only, as he made all days; but by consecration, designing and appointing it for a peculiar end, even for that strange and wonderful work of Christ's

resurrection from the grave, when he obtained his glorious victory, and our gracious deliverance from hell and destruction. Again, he made it, *i. e.* (as the word from the original may be rendered) exalted it. This is the day which the Lord hath honoured and exalted above its fellows, above the seventh, or any other day of the week, because of the incomparable work of this day. That the day prophesied of in that place is some remarkable day of the Messiah, is very clear, if we consider the context, and the two preceeding verses of this Psalm; by which it plainly appears, that the day there spoken of is the day wherein "the stone rejected by the builders," (*i. e.* Christ who was rejected by the elders, scribes and Pharisees, the pretended builders) became the head of the corner:" Now, what day was this, but his "resurrection day?" in which God, by raising him from the dead, gloriously exalted him above all enemies, rolled away his reproach, made him "Head of the corner," and Head of the church, by openly declaring him, to be his "Son with power," and that to the terror and confusion of all his enemies, and the joy and gladness of all his friends. And to put it beyond doubt that this is the meaning of the place, see it particularly applied by Peter, before the Jewish Sanhedrim, Acts iv. 11, 12. "Be it known to you, that this Jesus Christ whom ye crucified, God hath raised from the dead:" and therefore he subjoins, verse 12. "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become *the* head of the corner," Now, this being such a memorable day, the psalmist's direction is, that all Christians should rejoice and be glad in it; which indeed is a most proper duty on our Christian Sabbath.

Again we have another prophecy concerning this day, in Isa. xi. 10. "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious." Now, what was that special day, wherein Christ was raised and exalted for an ensign, to invite and engage the nations to flee to him as their Redeemer? Was it not his resurrection day, on which he was declared to the world to be "the Son of God with power," Rom. i. 4. This is the day then on which his rest was glorious. For as God the Father's "rest from the work of creation was glorious," and had great glory and honour put on it, by the world's

keeping a Sabbath for about four thousand years thereupon; so God the Son's "rest from the work of redemption" was to have great glory and honour put upon it, by the Christian world's observing a weekly Sabbath on it, to the end of time.

And was it not a glorious rest which the Son of God had on the first day of the week, from his great and stupendous work, when he had laid the foundations of the new heavens and new earth, and had given the finishing stroke to the new creation; when all "the stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" It was on this day the Son rested from his works, and was refreshed," as it is said of God, Exod. xxxi. 17 with respect to his resting from the works of the first creation. Now, as God's rest from his works on the seventh day, and his being refreshed therein, was a sufficient indication of the precise day of rest which he would have observed by the world under the old dispensation of the covenant; so the rest of our Lord Jesus Christ from his works on the first day of the week, and his being refreshed therein, is a sufficient indication of the precise day of rest which he would have observed under the dispensation of the new covenant. And accordingly, upon this indication, we immediately find the disciples assembling themselves together upon this day of their Redeemer's rest; and no sooner are they met, than Christ comes and graciously meets with them, solemnly blesses them, and gives them the Holy Ghost, John xx. 19. from which time forward, the first day of the week was never without its solemn assemblies.

Moreover, we have the apostle to the Hebrews expressly confirming the foresaid prophecies concerning Christ's rest upon the first day of the week, by telling us, that under the gospel, "there remained a rest for the people of God," Heb. iv. 9. Now if this place be duly considered, and rightly understood, it will mightily confirm the change of the Sabbath from the last to the first day of the week. For the word which is there rendered *rest* in the original, is *Sabbatismos*, and should be rendered a *Sabbatism* or *Sabbath-keeping*, and so the meaning is, (according to Dr, Owen and other learned commentators) "There remaineth a a Sabbath keeping for the people of God, under the New Testament as well as under the Old." And this (as the apostle shewed in the context) behoved necessarily to be a

new Sabbatism in regard it hath a new foundation, in correspondence to the foundation of the old Sabbatism mentioned verse 4. of that chapter. "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." Well (saith the apostle.) the new Sabbatism hath the like foundation, verse 10. "For he (viz. Jesus Christ) that is entered into his rest, hath also ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Now, it was on the morning of the first day of the week that Christ entered into his mediatory rest from his work of redemption, as God on the seventh day entered into his rest from the work of creation. And as God, by his resting on the seventh day, did determine that day for a sacred sabbatical rest under the Old Testament; so Christ (who is the Lord of the Sabbath) by his entering into his rest on the first day, did determine that day of the week for a sacred Sabbatism under the New Testament. The ceasing from his works, as God did from his, mentioned ver. 10. can never properly be applied (as some do) to the believer, but to Christ's ceasing from his works of redemption; seeing it is absurd to make our ceasing from the vile works of sin, a parallel to God's ceasing from his glorious works of creation. And it cannot be meant of ceasing from the works of duty and service to God; for, to all eternity, believers never cease from these, Rev. xxii. 3.

V. Our Lord Jesus Christ hath put honour upon the first day of the week, and authorised the observation of it by his own example and practice, which hath the force of a law to us. It was on this day he met with the two disciples going to Emmaus, opened the scriptures to them, and was made known to them in the breaking of bread, Luke xxiv. 13. Likewise upon the same day he appeared to the eleven, when gathered together, and others with them, shewed them his pierced hands and feet, comforted them, and opened their understandings that they might understand the scriptures, Luke xxiv. 33. 36. 40. 45. It was on this day that Christ came to his disciples, (being all convened together except Thomas) gave them his peace and blessed them, and also gave them their commission and the Holy Ghost, John xx. 16. 20, &c. Again, upon that day, eight days, being the next first day of the week, when the disciples were assembled together, and Thomas with them,

(John xx. 26.) Christ chose to appear unto them, and graciously convinced Thomas by the discovery of his wounds. Though Christ, after his resurrection met with several of his disciples upon other days of the week, yet on the first day only (which is therefore expressly recorded) did he appear to them when assembled together; and therefore we see how he left Thomas a whole week under his unbelief and doubtings, till the next Lord's day or first day of the week should come, that he might have occasion graciously to resolve him in the assembly of his disciples, for their common edification and comfort. The first day of the week is the only day of the week, or month, or year, that is ever mentioned by number in all the New Testament: and wherever it is spoken of, we hear of the religious observation of it, by the disciples assembling together.—And why are we told by the Evangelists so expressly, and so often, of Christ's making his visits to his disciples upon the first day of the week? but to shew us, that Christ put a peculiar honour and respect upon this day, and thereby gave us a plain intimation of his will, that it should be observed in his church, as the Christian Sabbath, or the weekly day of holy rest and holy convocations. That one day in seven should be religiously observed in this manner, was a law from the beginning, and that as old as the state of innocence (as I shewed before): but that, in the kingdom of the Messiah, the first day of the week should be that solemn day, this was indication enough, that Christ on that day once and again met his disciples in a religious assembly. And it is highly probable, that at his first meeting with them, he appointed them that day eight days to be together again, promising to meet them; for we find them more generally convened that day than the former, John xx. 26. "And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them," as it would seem waiting for Christ's coming. And many are of opinion, that he thus continued to meet with them every first day of the week, till his ascension, "speaking to them the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Acts i. 3.

Christ's meeting with them that day was not merely occasional, but designed; as appears by the express mentioning of the first day of the week so oft as he met them. For, when Christ met with his disciples on any other day of the

week, we are not told what day it was, whether the second, third, or fourth day of the week; but when he meets with them on the first day, the Holy Ghost names and records that, thereby ascribing something peculiar to it above the rest.

VI. The observation of the first day of the week is also authorised by the divinely inspired apostles of Christ, and founders of the Christian church, and that both by their example and direction.—We have them both directing and performing the duties of the Sabbath on this day, and also asserting Christ's propriety in it as his; all which is evident from scripture.

In the forecited scriptures, where we read of Christ's appearances to his disciples, we also read of their assembling together on the first day of the week several times; which certainly was for the public worship of God, and in honour of this day. For, when they met on other days of the week, it is not told what these were; but, when they met on the first day day of the week, the Holy Ghost records that; which shews it to be a remarkable day in itself, and observed as such by the disciples of Christ, and that in a religious way.

But, besides these, I shall adduce four other scriptures, that clearly demonstrate what is above asserted.

The first is, Acts ii. 1, 2. where it is recorded, that "the apostles and other brethren were met all together on the day of Pentecost in one place." This meeting was for public worship on the first day of the week, according to their wonted practice. It is not in the temple with the Jews, but in a house in Jerusalem by themselves.

Quest. How prove you that it was on the first day of the week? *Ans.* Because it is evident from scripture, that the passover that year fell on the Jewish Sabbath; and Pentecost being still the fiftieth day after the passover, it consequently fell that year on the first day of the week, or the Lord's day. Pentecost is a Greek word, signifying the *fiftieth*, called so because of its being still the fiftieth day after the passover, a Jewish feast, which fell sometimes upon one day of the week, and sometimes on another; but this year it fell on the last or seventh day of the week. Pentecost was another feast of the Jews, but kept in re-

membrance of God's giving the law that day on Mount Sinai, being the fiftieth day after their eating the passover and coming out of Egypt. And consequently, Pentecost falling this year upon the first day of the week, our Lord's resurrection day, the apostles and brethren assembled for celebrating this day by public worship. Now let us observe how remarkably God confirmed their keeping of the first day of the week, and blessed their meeting together upon it for worship: he even sent down that extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them, for fitting and furnishing them for the extraordinary work of planting the Christian church, and converting the world. This was a solemn approbation of the Christian Sabbath, and a seal to its institution from heaven, which did confirm all Christians in the celebrating of this day for the future: and many times have they experienced the gracious effusions of the Spirit on their public assemblies this day since that time. It is observed by Grotius, upon Exod. xix. 1. That it was on the first day of the week that the law was given in its fearful promulgation from Mount Sinai: but though God made that in some respects a terrible day to them, yet he makes it weekly a joyful day to us, by the comfortable promulgation of the gospel thereupon from Mount Zion.

A second scripture is, Acts xx. 7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them," &c. Whence it is plain that the first day of the week was then the stated time for Christians meeting together, for the preaching of the word, and celebrating of the Lord's supper; for this is recorded as their customary known practice. Paul had been at Troas seven days, and consequently was there upon the Jewish Sabbath; but there is no word of any meeting among them on that day, or any other day of the week: but when the first day of the week comes, the church is solemnly convened, and perform the work of the Sabbath on this day. Paul was ready to depart from that place, only he must stay till the first day of the week, that he might meet with the whole church, and preach to them before he leave them; and so, according to their custom, they all assemble together, and he sanctifies the Sabbath with them, by preaching and dispensing the sacrament, and that even till midnight; for they did not soon weary, at that time, of the work and duties of the Lord's day.

A third scripture is, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store," &c. Whence it is plain, that the apostle enjoins the church of Corinth, in conformity with other churches, to make their collections for the poor on the first day of the week. Now, why on the first day of the week and not on the seventh, or any other? but for these reasons: 1. They had their public meeting on this day, and so had more conveniency for gathering their charity on this day, than upon any other. 2. The first day of the week was now come in place of the old Sabbath, on which day collections were made in the Jewish synagogues; for the giving of alms was always reckoned a proper duty for the Sabbath day. But now the apostle will have all the duties of the Sabbath transferred to the first day of the week, and particularly this duty of public charity, there being a peculiar fitness in this day for it, in regard we are called this day to commemorate Christ's infinite charity to our souls, and also to receive new blessings and expressions of bounty from him; and therefore should be the more liberal to his poor saints. I hope there is none that will say that the apostle had not Christ's warrant for what he appointed in this matter; for in this epistle he protests, that "he delivered nothing to them, but what he had received from the Lord, and had his command for;" see 1 Cor. xi. 23. and xiv. 43. It is as clear as light, from the foresaid testimony, and many others, that the primitive Christians had their assemblies on the first day of the week, which they would not have had without the apostles' direction; nor would the apostles have determined so, without knowing the mind of Christ.

A fourth scripture is, Rev. i. 10. where John saith of himself, that "he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day:" which, to be sure, is no other than the Christian Sabbath, getting the denomination from our Lord Jesus Christ, and his rising from the dead thereupon, and frequent meetings with his disciples this day; and to the present time it still retains this title of the Lord's day, being a day specially instituted for the honour of our Lord, and consecrated for his service and worship. The apostle wrote this book near the end of the first century, and calls this day by that name which it commonly got then, and speaks of it as a day uni-

versally known and remarkable for the Christians' observation of it. The apostle at this time was banished into the isle of Patmos by Domitian the emperor, where probably he wanted the opportunity of public assemblies on this day; yet he is employed in sanctifying the Lord's day in a private way; he is in the Spirit, *i. e.* in a spiritual frame, and taken up in spiritual exercises, meditation and prayer (which are proper duties for the Sabbath) and the Lord rewards this his conscientious regard to this day, with the revelation of these great things which were afterwards to fall out to the church to the end of the world.

Moreover, it is observable, that the Lord puts his name on this day; for the Holy Ghost calls it here the Lord's day, and that for these reasons: 1. Because of its deriving its institution from him: so the prayer dictated by him, is called the Lord's prayer; the sacrament of his supper, instituted by him, is called the Lord's supper.

2. It is called the Lord's, because of his special propriety in it. He hath separated and set it apart from common use, and consecrated it wholly to his use and service: so the sacrament is called the Lord's table, because of its being consecrated for holy uses, and so set apart and distinguished from all other tables.

3. Because of its being dedicated to his honour and memory, being the day in which he conquered death, got a total victory, and triumphed over all his enemies.

4. It is called the Lord's day, because the Lord Jesus Christ, his person and mediation, is the principal subject of this day.

VII. Another argument for the observation of the Christian Sabbath, may be drawn from the constant and uninterrupted practice of all Christ's churches through the world since the apostles' days: they have all continued to observe the Lord's day for holy worship. All the ancient fathers and Christians had the Lord's day in great esteem, and made it a badge of their religion, to observe it carefully; as appears from the writings of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, &c. Ignatius, that ancient father, who lived so near Christ's times, in his epistles, highly recommends the Lord's day: "Let every one that loveth Christ, saith he, observe the first day of the week, the Lord's day, as the queen of all days." It is a remarkable saying of Augus-

tine, "As the Virgin Mary was blessed above all women, so is the first day of the week blessed above all days."

VIII. The consciences of men plead for the divine authority of the Lord's day. Surely it is God, who is the Supreme Lord and Sovereign of men's consciences, that directs this his deputy in men, to excite and press them so closely to the observation of this day, and also to challenge and smite them so sharply for the neglect and profanation of it. And indeed there is no sin that conscience more commonly accuses wicked men of. than the breach of the Lord's day. And hence it is, that many malefactors, at their last hour, when most serious, do most bitterly bewail it: acknowledging that their Sabbath-breaking was their leading sin, and the occasion of all the rest of their wicked courses; having provoked God to leave them, and give them up to the lust of their own hearts, and temptations of the devil. Clark, in his second volume of Examples, tells us of one Thomas Savage, (a young man who was executed at Ratcliff, October 28, 1668, for murdering his fellow servant.) that whilst he was in prison, cried out to some that came to visit him, after this manner: "Oh wretch that I was! I studied how I might spend the Lord's day in the devil's work; at that time when I should have been serving God, I was busiest in serving Satan. I was glad when the Sabbath came, for then I had leisure to pursue my lusts and pleasures. I sometimes went into the church. but I never staid the time of a whole sermon. I laughed at those who spent the Sabbaths in hearing and praying. and looked on them as the veriest fools in the world. O tell young men from me, that Sabbath-breaking is a dangerous and costly sin," &c.

Turner, on Providence, gives an account of one Edmund Kirk, vintner, executed at Tyburn, July 11, 1684, for murdering his wife, who in his confession lamented his frequent profanation of the Lord's day: "Upon which holy day, saith he, I committed the heinous sin of murdering my poor wife." Thus one sin was punished with another, Sabbath-breaking with murder, and that with the gallows. Likewise, he tells of another, executed May 25, 1687, for theft; who in his confession said, "That it was his earnest desire, that all young men especially, should take care not to mispend the Lord's day." And the author's remark

is, that he doth not know that ever he observed any repentance in a malefactor, who did not bitterly lament his neglect of his duty to God on that day.

IX. In the *last* place. The dispensations of divine providence may be brought in, as giving suffrage to the sanctification of the Lord's day. God hath highly honoured this day, by doing many mighty works upon it: On this day he created the light, and began to make the world; on this day he gave the law from mount Sinai, as Grotius observes. Nay, it is affirmed by an ancient council held at Constantinople, Counc. 6. Can. 8. "That Christ was born on the Lord's day, and the star shined to the wise men on it. Christ fed the five thousand with the five loaves and two fishes on this day: and he was baptized, rose from the dead, and sent down the Holy Ghost on this day." And some of the ancients have further affirmed, that whatsoever notable thing was done in the world, (the Lord ordered it so.) was done to the honour of this day. Thus God hath consecrated the first day of the week, or Christian Sabbath, by doing so many of his wonderful works upon it; to intimate to us, that it is his will we should sanctify this day, and observe it weekly, for publishing and proclaiming his worthy acts, and keeping up the memory of Christ's nativity, passion, resurrection, &c. to the end of the world, without instituting days of our own for these ends.

Moreover there are various dispensations from God, both of mercy and judgment, that conclude for the observation of this holy day. The gracious providences, that attend the conscientious observers of the Lord's day, are most remarkable. On these the Lord pours down the gracious influences of his Spirit, in his ordinances dispensed this day; he eminently blesseth them with increase of grace, tenderness of conscience, and holiness of life: and with all his best blessings, both spiritual and temporal. God hath now for these 1700 years past, granted all his churches through the world, many signal marks of his favour and presence in observing the Lord's day, which they could not have expected, had they been in an error in keeping it. How often hath he poured out his Spirit upon them when attending ordinances on this day, and blessed them with conviction, conversion, and manifestations of his love? Nay the universal experience of Christians do testify, that all the bles-

sings and mercies, promised to the observers of the Sabbath under the Old Testament, are now transferred and accomplished to the keepers of the Christian Sabbath: for the change of the day being by divine authority, the first day Sabbath doth lawfully succeed to all the privileges, promises and threatenings formerly pertaining to the seventh day Sabbath. We see what blessings are promised to the keeping of the Sabbath of old, both spiritual and temporal: that is a remarkable word, Jer. xvii. 24. 26. "If ye hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein, then they shall come from the cities of Judah, and all other places, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise unto the house of the Lord;" *i. e.* When the Sabbath is duly observed, then the church shall flourish, religion shall be promoted, and the name of God highly exalted. And do we not see this promise visibly accomplished to such churches and persons as strictly sanctify the Lord's day? Among such Christianity doth flourish, knowledge is increased, reformation is advanced, grace is multiplied, and a conscientious regard is had to all the other duties of religion.

Again, we find temporal mercies annexed to the keeping of the Sabbath, Isa. lviii. 13, 14, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath," *i. e.* if thou ceasest from profaning it, "I will cause thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father:" *i. e.* Thou shalt be blessed with outward prosperity, and many earthly enjoyments.—This is again confirmed in Jer. xvii. 24, 25. "If ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein, then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots, and this city shall remain for ever:" *i. e.* The nation and city shall be blessed with all secular and civil advantages. Accordingly the people of God have found the hallowing of the Sabbath day sensibly prosperous to them with respect to their secular affairs: when they have discharged the duties of this day with a good conscience, it hath fared the better with them all the week after. In testimony whereof, I shall here narrate the experience of that excellent person, Sir Matthew Hale, lord chief justice of the king's bench, in the reign of king Charles II. who was both an eminent lawyer, and a good divine. In his book, called Contemplations,

moral and divine, he hath these words: "I have found (saith he) by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observing the duty of the Lord's day, hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week that hath been so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me: And, on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my secular employments; so that I could easily make an estimate of my successes in my own secular employments the week following, by the manner of my passing this day. And this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience." Again, in another place, he saith, "I thank God, I ever found, that in the strictest observation of the times of his worship, I ever met with the best advantage to my worldly occasions? and that, whenever my worldly occasions encroached upon those times, I ever met with disappointment, though in things of the most probable success: and ever let it be so with me. It hath been and ever shall be to me, a conviction beyond all argument and demonstration whatsoever, that God expects the observation of his times: and, that while I find myself thus dealt with, God hath not given over his care of me. It would be a sad presage unto me, of the severe anger of my Maker, if my inadvertance should cast me upon a temporal undertaking upon this day, and that it should prosper." Thus the learned and pious Judge Hale, who spake from his own experience, after long and critical observation of divine providence.

Again, the judgments which often follow upon the violation of this day, do give testimony to its divine authority. How sad are the spiritual strokes, though little noticed, which God inflicts upon the slighters of his holy day, by giving them up to hardness of heart, searedness of conscience, and vile affections; so that commonly they fall into scandalous out-breakings, and notorious crimes, proceeding from evil to worse, till they at length run themselves into some fatal mischief! And, when men neglect to punish the profanation of this day, the Lord usually takes the sword into his own hand, and by visible temporal judgment, plagues the profaners of it. If the violation of the Jewish Sabbath, was by a divine order, punished with death, under the law, Exod. xxxi. 15. surely the breach of

the Christian Sabbath shall not escape without some signal marks of the divine vengeance, according to the scripture threatenings, which are levelled against the one as well as the other, as I shewed before. Let us not forget that terrible denuncitaion of judgment, which we have in Jer. xvii. 27. "But if you will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." The Jews (as Augustine observes) fell generally into this grievous sin of profaning the Sabbath: for though they pretended to hallow it, by forbearing servile labour upon it; yet upon that day, above all days, they used to pamper the flesh with carnal delights, and run into the excesses of gluttony and drunkenness. Against these sins did our Saviour warn them; but, they persisting, the foresaid direful threatening was at length exactly fulfilled: for upon that very day, so abused by them, their regal city Jerusalem, the glory and master-piece of the whole earth, was burnt down to the ground by the Romans. And this Hegisippus and Dio observe to have been done on the Sabbath day, in September, about forty years after Christ's death.

And doth not that prophetical commination concern us, as well as the Jews? And have we not cause to fear the accomplishment of it for the breach of the Christian Sabbath? Yes, we have found it to be true. Some impartial observers of God's judgments in the world have remarked, that this sin, viz. the breach of the fourth command, by the profane neglect of God's worship upon the Lord's day, and the spending of this time in open works of impiety, hath been frequently visited upon cities and private persons, by consuming fires that have happened upon this day: of which many instances might be given in this same island, as well as other parts of the world. That fiery prediction against Jerusalem hath been oftener than once fulfilled and executed upon the two capital cities thereof, many of whose inhabitants have been as guilty of profaning the day set apart for God's service as ever the Jews were. In London this vice reigned, and there it was dreadfully punished with a furious and astonishing fire in the year 1666, which laid the most part of that great city, with its fairest

churches and buildings, in rubbish, in three days space: and it is remarkable, that this dreadful fire broke forth on the Lord's day very early in the morning, being the second day of September.

Likewise in Edinburgh, where Sabbath breaking very much abounded, (as appears by the acts of assembly made against that sin) the fairest and stateliest of its buildings in the Parliament close, and about it, (to which scarce any in Britain were comparable) were on the fourth of February, 1700, (being the Lord's day,) burnt down and laid in ashes and ruins, in the space of a few hours, to the astonishment and terror of the sorrowful inhabitants: whereof I myself was an eye witness: and the effects of that fire are visible to this day. Yea so great was the terror and confusion of that Lord's day, that the people of the city were in no case to attend any sermon or public worship upon it, though there was a great number of worthy ministers convened in the place, (besides the reverend ministers of the city,) ready to have prayed with or preached to the people on that sad occasion; (for the General Assembly was sitting there at the time:) But the dismal case of the city made this impracticable. However the Lord himself, by that silent Sabbath, did loudly preach to all the inhabitants of the city, setting forth to them, in a most awakening manner, the great sin and danger of irreligious neglecting of God's worship upon the Lord's day, and profaning it, "by doing their own works, and finding their own pleasures."

I have read of the town of Stratford upon Avon, that it was twice, upon the Lord's days, almost consumed with fire, chiefly for profaning the Lord's day, and contemning his word in the mouth of his faithful minister. The like also might be told of several towns in Scotland.

Dr. Beard, in his Theatre of God's judgments, tells us of the town of Feverton, in Devonshire, that was often admonished by her godly pastor, that God would bring some heavy judgment upon the inhabitants of that place, for their profanation of the Lord's day, occasioned chiefly by preparing for their weekly market, which they then held on the Monday. Accordingly, very soon after the said minister's death, on the 3d of April, 1598, God sent a terrible fire, which in less than half an hour consumed the whole

town, except the church, the court-house, alms-house, and a few poor people's dwellings; where a man might have seen four hundred dwelling-houses all at once on fire, and above fifty persons consumed in the flames. But the remaining inhabitants not takiug warning by the former judgment, but continuing in the same sin, the town was again fired on the 5th of August, 1612, (fourteen years after the former fire,) and all consumed, except a few poor houses. The historian adds, that they are blind who see not in this the finger of God: and he prays for grace to the people of that city, when it is next built, to change their market day, and to remove all occasions of profaning the Lord's day.

Dr. Twiss, on the Sabbath, relates a passage that happened in Bedfordshire, not long before writing that book. A match at foot-ball being appointed on the Sabbath afternoon, whilst two of the most forward were in the belfry, tolling of a bell to call the company together, there was suddenly heard a clap of thunder, and a flash of lightning was seen by some that sat in the church porch, coming through a dark lane, which flashed in their faces, and much terrified them; and, passing through the porch into the belfry, it tripped up his heels that was tolling the bell, and struck him dead; and the other that was with him was so sorely blasted therewith, that shortly after he died also.

Mr. Clark, in his father's life, p. 128, hath a very strange passage, to this purpose. Mr Hugh Clark preached at Oundle, in Northampton, where the people were generally very ignorant, and much addicted to the profanation of the Lord's day, by Whitson ales, Morice-dances, and such pastimes, which he much set himself against, endeavouring to convince them of the evil, and denouncing God's judgments against them in case of perseverance: but they being trained up in those courses, and hardened by custom, persisted still in their wickedness. At last, on a Lord's day, the leader of the dance, being a lusty young man, in the midst of their profane pastimes, fell down suddenly and died; but they, soon shaking off their fear, returned to their vomit again. The Lord's day following, Mr. Clark took occasion, from this sad dispensation, to quote the forecited text, Jer. xvii. 27. "If thou wilt not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath day, then will I kindle a fire," &c. But the people kicked against these admonitions, and that same

evening went to their sports again; among whom was a smith that was a chief ringleader. But it pleased God, the very next day, two husbandmen coming to his shop to sharpen their ploughshares, a spark from the red-hot iron, as he was beating it upon the anvil, flew into the thatch, which both the smith and his neighbours saw, but had no power to move towards it; which presently burnt down the smith's shop, house, and all his goods. This Mr. Clark pressed upon their consciences; but nothing would prevail, till at last, upon a Sabbath day at night, when they were retired to their several homes, there was heard a great noise and rattling of chains up and down the town, which was accompanied with such a smell and stink of fire and brimstone, that many of their guilty consciences suggested to them, that the devil was come to fetch them away: and now, and not till now, they began to think in good earnestness of a reformation.

Mr. Clark, in his Examples, tells us of one Mr. Abberly, a godly minister, in Burton upon Trent, who took occasion often to reprove and threaten Sabbath breakers, especially such as sold and bought meat upon Sabbath day mornings, a practice too common in that place. Nevertheless, there was a taylor, that dwelt in the upper end of the town, who would go through the long street (as it were in a bravado) to the other end of the town, and fetch home meat on the Lord's day morning; but as he returned with both his hands full, in the midst of the street he fell down dead. I was (saith Dr. Teate) an eye-witness, both of his fall and burial; and it pleased God thereby to work some reformation, both among the butchers and others.

Also he relates, from one Mr. Falconer, minister of Burford, near Salisbury, a fearful example of God's justice, about the year 1635. A profane company of young men, on the Lord's day, early in the morning, went to Claringdon park, to cut down a May-pole; and having loaded a cart with it, at Milner's Bars, entering into the city of Salisbury, one of the cart-wheels fell into a rut, which made the young tree in the cart (which they had stole for a May-pole.) to give a great surge on one side, so that it struck one of the company such a blow on the head, that it beat out his brains, and he instantly died on the place, and lay there a fearful spectacle of God's wrath, both against

that heathenish sport, and wilful profaning of the Sabbath; whilst he maketh the very thing they had chosen for their sport and pastime, to be the instrument of executing his fury. The author saith, that he diligently inquired after the truth of this matter, at his first going to Sarum; and many godly and credible persons, who had seen that sad spectacle, in his hearing, attested it to be so as above narrated.

Also, in the county of Devon, one Edward Ameridith, a gentleman, having been pained in his feet, and being somewhat recovered, one said unto him, He was glad to see him so nimble, Ameridith replied, That he doubted not but to dance about the May-pole next Lord's day; but, before he moved out of that place, he was smitten with such feebleness of heart, and dizziness in his head, that desiring help to carry him to a house, he died before the Lord's day came.

Dr. Twiss on the Sabbath, tells, That at a place called Tidworth, on the Sabbath day, many being met together to play at foot-ball in the church yard, one had his leg broke which presently gangrening, he forthwith died thereof. Likewise at Alcester, in Warwickshire, a lusty young woman (upon the coming forth of the declaration for sports) went on the Sabbath day to a green not very far off, where she said she would dance as long as she could stand: but, while she was dancing God struck her with a violent disease, whereof, within two or three days after, she died.

Beard, in his Theatre, writes of a certain nobleman, that used to go a hunting on the Lord's day in time of sermon, who had a child by his wife with a head like a dog, and it howled like a hound.

I shall conclude with one example more from Mr. Clark. He gives an account of a godly minister, that one day was preaching, and earnestly pressing the sanctification of the Sabbath; and, in his sermon, he had occasion to make mention of that man, that, by the special commandment of God, was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. Whereupon one in the congregation was so wicked as to rise up and laugh; yea, made all the haste he could out of the church, and went to gathering of sticks, though he had no need of them: but, when the people came out from the sermon, they found him in their way, lying

dead, with the bundle of sticks in his arms. These instances of divine vengeance, inflicted upon the profaners of the Lord's day, may contribute very much to confirm us in the belief of the divine institution of this holy day; and likewise may serve to warn all ranks and degrees of persons, to guard against the contempt and violation of the Lord's day. The Lord indeed exerciseth great long sufferings and patience towards many notorious Sabbath-breakers, to shew us that there is a judgment to come: but nevertheless he makes monuments of some, to let us know, that "verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

Many more examples might be brought, if it were needful, from all corners of the land; but I truly believe, there are few serious observers of providence, but might relate many sad instances of the discovery of God's displeasure against the profanation of the Lord's day, from their own experience and observation.

After all, I hope there is none that fears God, loves Christ, and believes the holy Scriptures, but will see these arguments which I have adduced, to be convincing demonstrations of the necessity of sanctifying the Lord's day, and honouring it as God's Sabbath, to the end of the world.

Now, to sum up the whole, let us lay all these together: The solid ground for the morality of the fourth command, the weighty reasons of the change of the day, and the special marks of honour that Christ hath put upon this holy day; it being the day in which he first made the light to shine; the day wherein also the Sun of righteousness arose, dispelling the clouds of guilt and fear; the day he subdued his enemies, manifested himself to his disciples, and taught them his will; the day he sent the Holy Ghost to his apostles; the day he hath called by his own name, and reserved for his own use, and upon which he holds special communion with his people, and vouchsafes them the marks of his royal favour; the day which God highly honours by his providential dispensations.—And will it not then be judged an high affront to Almighty God, to pour contempt on that day which he delights to honour?—Surely it ought to be matter of grief to all true lovers of God when they see it done. We are told, that when one of Darius's eunuchs saw Alexander setting his feet upon a rich table of his master's, he fell a weeping; and being asked the reason of

it, he said, " It was to see the table his master so highly esteemed, now made a footstool." And may we not weep to see the day that God hath honoured and blessed, and for which he is so highly concerned, made a footstool, and trampled on by so many profane persons in our days? To be sure, God will not sit with such open affronts as he gets from some in this matter.

Thus, I think I have demonstrated the morality of the fourth command, and the divine institution of the Lord's day for our Christian Sabbath; which, by necessary consequence, proves the abolition of the Jewish seventh day Sabbath. For though there were no other scripture warrant for abolishing the old Sabbath, (which nevertheless there is, as I shewed before,) yet seeing it is evident that our Lord Jesus Christ, " the Lord of the Sabbath," hath by his resurrection, example and authority, for ever consecrated the first day of the week, for the solemn remembrance and celebration of the Lord's rest from the great work of redemption, and of that unparalleled deliverance wrought by him for a lost world, and thereby hath set apart the first day for our Sabbath; then, of course, the old seventh day must cede, and resign its sanctity to it, and be for ever abrogated. The Christian Sabbath must necessarily extinguish the Jewish, seeing the two Sabbath days cannot stand in force together: for, by virtue of the fourth command, there is but one day of seven to be observed for the Sabbath, one day only after six working days, and not two after five. And since it is the ancient and unrepealed institution of God, that men should labour six days of the week, and observe but one day for the Sabbath; then surely, if we should labour but five days of the week, and keep two for the Sabbath, we would expressly violate the law. So that no Christian needs to have the least scruple about the abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath.

But though the seventh day be now divested of its sanctity, and hath no more claim to the Sabbath, having resigned all its dignity and privileges to the first day of the week, the New Testament Sabbath; yet still it hath the honour of ushering it in, and of serving as a preparation day for it. As the Jewish typical worship ushered in the evangelical spiritual worship; and the Jewish deliverances from Egypt and Babylon were preparatory to that more glorious

and general one from hell and destruction by Jesus Christ, which is this day commemorated: so the Jewish seventh day Sabbath serves to usher in and prepare us for the glorious festival of the Christian Sabbath, which is to continue while Christ hath a church upon earth, being the only day appointed to be kept in remembrance of him, and as serving to usher in and prepare us for that far more glorious and celestial Sabbath above, which shall never have an end.

O then endeavour by all means to get and keep up a high esteem of the Lord's day, that day which God hath exalted above all the days of the week and above all the Jewish Sabbaths and festivals whatsoever. Of them in comparison of the Lord's day, we may say, in allusion to that word, Heb. i. 11, 12. "They perish, but thou remainest; and they all wax old like a garment, and as a vesture thou hast folded them up, and they are changed; but thou shalt (maugre all the malice of men and devils) continue the same, and thy years shall not fail." These were but as morning stars, to usher in the sun. Other festivals, in all their royalty, are not arrayed like thee. All the graces triumph in thee; all the ordinances conspire to adorn thee; the sacred Trinity do delight in the thee: The Father ruleth thee, the Son rose upon thee, and the Spirit hath overshadowed thee. Thus it is done to the day which the King of heaven delighteth to honour; and what shall be done to the man that delighteth to dishonour and put contempt upon thee!

Surely, as "God will not hold him guiltless" that breaks the third command, "by taking his name in vain;" so he will not hold him guiltless that breaks the fourth commandment, by spending his day in vain. And though the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, or may even escape outward judgments from God in this world; yet there is a day coming when he will call them to account for it. Oh sinners! the day of the Lord is like to be a dreadful day to you that despise the Lord's day.

Quest. VI. *What is that proportion of time which is to be sequestrated and allowed for the Sabbath day? and when doth it begin and end.*

Ans. The fourth command requires one day in every seven; by which we are not to understand only the artifi-

cial day from sun-rising to sun-setting, or from the break of day until the darkness of the night comes on, and think then the Sabbath is over, and that we are no longer bound to abstain from our own works; and far less are we to think that the Sabbath is no longer than the time of public worship doth last, and that we are at freedom from the work and duties of the Sabbath when that is over. This some say in words, and many more in their practice.

But, consider what absurdities would follow hereupon: For, if no more time be allowed for the Sabbath, but the time of public worship; then it would follow, that God requires no private or secret duties from us on that day, since these will need some more time: but that cannot be; for, if private and secret duties be required of us on week days, then much more on the Sabbath day.

Again, it would follow, that some must keep longer Sabbaths, and others shorter; nay, the Sabbath of many shall not be above an hour or two of the day; for there are ministers and people who are scarce so long at public worship. But the whole day is the Lord's, and not a part only. You will have your servants to work the whole six week days, for you, from morning to night, and not be contented with their working an hour or two only of these days: so neither should you yield less to God than you require for yourselves. Nay, if attendance on public worship were all that is requisite this day, by virtue of the command, it would follow, that a man would be loosed from the obligation of the command, if he were in a place of the world where God is not publicly worshipped.

But all these things being absurd, I do, upon solid ground assert, that the whole natural day, consisting of twenty-four hours, is to be set apart for the Sabbath day; and that we ought to measure this day, and begin and end it, as we do other days, that is, from midnight to midnight; during which time we are to abstain from our own works, and sanctify the Lord's Sabbath. For the fourth command binds us to consecrate the seventh part of every week to the Lord, who challengeth a special property in one day of seven, and asserts his just title thereto, saying, "the seventh day is the Lord's:" and also Isa. lvii. 13. he expressly calls it, "My holy day." It is all holy; and therefore no part must be profaned or applied to common uses. It

is all the Lord's; and so it is unlawful for us to rob him of any part of it, and alienate it to our private use.

Object. But who is able to spend the whole twenty-four hours in religious duties?

Ans. I do not say that this is to be done without any intermission; for we do not this in following our employments on other days: a due proportion of every day is to be reserved for the natural support of our bodies, and particularly for moderate eating and sleeping, which are works of necessity, and must be allowed on the Sabbath, as well as other days; with this difference only, that whereas they are done on other days to enable us for labour, they are to be done on the Sabbath to strengthen us for holy duties; and so cannot properly be called our own works. Neither can the doing thereof be called a taking of God's time to our own use, since this contributes to our better spending of God's time, and is truly necessary for God's service on the Sabbath. But, besides the time requisite for the works of necessity and mercy, the whole natural day as above described, is holy unto the Lord, and ought to be employed in religious duties; and not a part of the day only. Both Sabbath morning and Sabbath night, should be spent in prayer and praises, as is plain from the 92d Psalm, which is entitled, "A psalm or song for the Sabbath day," ver. 1.; and ver. 2. we are told, that "It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and shew forth his loving kindness in the morning, and his faithfulness every night." But more of this afterwards, when I come directly to treat of the sanctification of the Sabbath. And, before I do this, I judge it necessary to answer some objections brought, against the morality of the Sabbath, and the change of the day.

Quakers, Familists, and others, holding that there is no difference of days, and so denying the divine authority of Sabbath, I shall consider what they say.

Some objections against the former doctrine answered.

Object. 1. "Every day ought to be a Sabbath to a Christian, and so there is no need of a set day."

Ans. Though Christians should serve God, and walk with him every day, yet they cannot make every day a Sabbath for the public worship of God, since God calls them

to other necessary work and business thereupon, which are inconsistent with the solemn spiritual employment of the Sabbath.

Object. 2. "Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, and elsewhere, condemns the observation of days under the New Testament."

Ans. The Apostle speaks only of the Jewish Sabbath, and festivals, which were shadows of things to come, and abolished by Christ's coming; but not of the Lord's day, which the apostle himself observed, and did particularly recommend to the Galatians for their observation, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

Object. 3. "The Sabbath was given as a type or sign only to the Jews; and therefore must be abolished with the rest of their types and ceremonies."

Ans. 1. The Sabbath is indeed said to be given as a sign betwixt God and his people, Ezek. xx. 12.: but that is not confined to the people of the Jews, (except as to the seventh day Sabbath only, of which I spoke before) but to be extended to all God's people to the end of the world.

2. There is a great difference betwixt a sign and a ceremony, which is an alterable thing. The rainbow is called a sign, Gen. ix. God's moral precepts are called signs, Deut. vi. 8. Yet none will say that these are ceremonies, or alterable things.

3. Some signs are ceremonial and alterable; others are moral and perpetual; the Sabbath is not a sign of the first, but of the latter sort. Indeed, all the signs and types of the sacrifice of the Messiah, and justification by Christ to come, were nailed to the cross with him, and abrogated; but all signs were not of this kind. The rainbow is given as a sign of the world's preservation from a deluge, and is perpetual. The ten commandments are given as probative signs of our obedience, and are perpetual, and so is the Sabbath. Indeed the Sabbath is a more peculiar sign than any of the rest of the commands, and therefore is emphatically called a sign several times in scripture.

1. It is a sign of God's special love and favour to his people; the Sabbath is a great blessing and privilege to them; for which Nehemiah gives God thanks in a special manner, Neh. ix. 14.; of which more afterward.

2. It is a sign of that eternal rest above, provided for the people of God.

3. The religious observation of the Sabbath is a declarative sign of our sanctification; therefore it is said, Exod. xxxi. and Ezek, xx. that the Lord gave his people Sabbaths and signs, that "they might know that he was the Lord that sanctified them." So that it is plain from these, that the Sabbath is a sign to us as well as to the Jews.

Object. 4. "But (say the Quakers and other sectaries) there is no holiness in days, one time is not better than another; and therefore the Sabbath doth not differ from other days in the week."

Ans. I grant, one day is not holier than another in itself, (as one place is not more holy in its own nature than another,) yet it may be holier in respect of its use. Thus the Sabbath day hath a relative holiness in it, as it is designed and appropriated to God's use and service, and therefore must not be alienated to uses of our own; for this would be sacrilege, which is a heinous crime. Hence it is, that the Lord doth expressly call the Sabbath a holy day, Isa. lviii. 13.

Object. 5. "But (say they) doth God require us to be more religious and godly at one time than another?"

Ans. There are some times that God requires us to give ourselves more to religion, and to express it more by outward acts of worship, than at other times. I grant, that we ought always to be religious, and to serve and worship God every day of the week; but God in his wisdom hath thought fit to set apart a certain season, wherein he requires more of the solemn, external, and visible exercises of religion, and performance of holy duties, than at other times. The reasons of his so doing I mentioned before.

Some objections against the change of the day answered.

Object. 1. "The seventh day Sabbath was instituted in the state of innocency; therefore it is to be held as moral and unalterable."

Ans. The institution of the Sabbath, or consecration of "one day in seven to the Lord," may be hence concluded moral and perpetual, since the reason and ground of it is such, as was shewed before; but it will not follow, that the

Before I proceed to handle these, I shall lay down some cautions for the right understanding of the fourth command, and for preventing mistakes. Wherefore, when God doth here appoint us six days of the week for our labour, and one day for his worship, we must not think that it is God's meaning, 1. That no part of our six days is to be spent in religious exercises; for, under the law, there were set portians of every day consecrated to divine worship in the tabernacle and temple. Nor,

2. Doth he mean that no whole day beside the Sabbath may be set apart for imploring God's mercy in time of distress, or returning thanks to God for some special favour or deliverance, when the providence of God calls us to it: for we find God himself enjoining the observation of other days beside the seventh, Exod. xxxiv. Lev. xxiii. Numb. xxviii. and commanding cessation from labour on these days. It is not the design of the fourth command to lay us under a peremptory or indispensable obligation of labouring in all the six days throughout; but only to enjoin us not to labour on any other day but these six days, and to do all our works upon them, so as we be not hindered from serving God in a solemn manner on the seventh.

SECTION I.

Concerning the holy rest riquisite on the Sabbath.

THIS holy rest upon the Sabbath consists in a total abstinence from all worldly employments and recreations; and from whatever work, business or action, that may anywise prove a hindrance to the worship and service of God upon that day. This is plain, not only from the fourth command itself, but from many other scriptures, particularly Jer. xvii. 24. Isa. lviii. 13.

I shall here propose some questions upon this subject to be answered.

Quest. 1. *Are no sort of works lawful on the Sabbath day?*

Ans. There are three sorts of works ordinarily excepted, as not prohibited by the fourth command, viz. the works of piety, of mercy, and of necessity.

1. The works of piety, that is, such bodily actions or labour as are necessary and subservient to the performance of divine worship, or contribute to order or decency therein: these are lawful and necessary on the Sabbath day: Such were "the killing of beasts, washing and preparing of sacrifices; the convocating people to worship by blowing of trumpets, making short journeys to attend worship, &c." under the law. So now, under the gospel, ministers toiling their bodies in preaching and praying, people travelling to the church, the ringing of bells, and the like, are lawful on the Sabbath day.

2. Works of mercy and charity are lawful on this day, yea, and necessary also; for, seeing the Sabbath is instituted as a memorial of God's great love and mercy to us, we are bound upon it to shew charity both to the souls and bodies of men, and mercy to the very beasts also. So that "the feeding our bodies, our beasts, and using means for the help of man or beast in distress, and preserving of their lives, the visiting the sick, making collections for the poor," and the like, are lawful on the Sabbath day: for the Jews had allowance for these under the law; so have we now under the gospel.

3. Works of necessity and great conveniency, which could not be foreseen, nor provided against the day before, and cannot be delayed to another day: such as "fleeing from enemies, or defending ourselves against them; quenching of fire, dressing of meat, putting on our clothes," and the like; these are also lawful on the Sabbath. The Maccabees of old did not decline to fight on the Sabbath day, nor did the Jews long before their days; for the Jewish writers tell us, that the overthrow of Jericho was on the Sabbath; which also seems to be founded upon Josh. vi. 3, 4. where it is said, "They shall compass the city six days, and on the seventh day the walls of the city shall fall down, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him." Only take these cautions concerning such works: See that the necessity be real and not pretended, and that you have no secret complacency in its falling out. Take heed that it be not a necessity of your own bringing, and which you might have foreseen and prevented the week before. And, when you are doing these works of necessity and mercy, endeavour to keep your hearts in a spiritual

Before I proceed to handle these, I shall lay down some cautions for the right understanding of the fourth command, and for preventing mistakes. Wherefore, when God doth here appoint us six days of the week for our labour, and one day for his worship, we must not think that it is God's meaning, 1. That no part of our six days is to be spent in religious exercises; for, under the law, there were set portians of every day consecrated to divine worship in the tabernacle and temple. Nor,

2. Doth he mean that no whole day beside the Sabbath may be set apart for imploring God's mercy in time of distress, or returning thanks to God for some special favour or deliverance, when the providence of God calls us to it: for we find God himself enjoining the observation of other days beside the seventh, Exod. xxxiv. Lev. xxiii. Numb. xxviii. and commanding cessation from labour on these days. It is not the design of the fourth command to lay us under a peremptory or indispensable obligation of labouring in all the six days throughout: but only to enjoin us not to labour on any other day but these six days, and to do all our works upon them, so as we be not hindered from serving God in a solemn manner on the seventh.

SECTION I.

Concerning the holy rest riquisite on the Sabbath.

THIS holy rest upon the Sabbath consists in a total abstinence from all worldly employments and recreations; and from whatever work, business or action, that may anywise prove a hindrance to the worship and service of God upon that day. This is plain, not only from the fourth command itself, but from many other scriptures, particularly Jer. xvii. 24. Isa. lviii. 13.

I shall here propose some questions upon this subject to be answered.

Quest. 1. *Are no sort of works lawful on the Sabbath day?*

Ans. There are three sorts of works ordinarily excepted, as not prohibited by the fourth command, viz. the works of pety, of mercy, and of necessity.

1. The works of piety, that is, such bodily actions or labour as are necessary and subservient to the performance of divine worship, or contribute to order or decency therein: these are lawful and necessary on the Sabbath day: Such were "the killing of beasts, washing and preparing of sacrifices; the convocating people to worship by blowing of trumpets, making short journeys to attend worship, &c." under the law. So now, under the gospel, ministers toiling their bodies in preaching and praying, people travelling to the church, the ringing of bells, and the like, are lawful on the Sabbath day.

2. Works of mercy and charity are lawful on this day, yea, and necessary also; for, seeing the Sabbath is instituted as a memorial of God's great love and mercy to us, we are bound upon it to shew charity both to the souls and bodies of men, and mercy to the very beasts also. So that "the feeding our bodies, our beasts, and using means for the help of man or beast in distress, and preserving of their lives, the visiting the sick, making collections for the poor," and the like, are lawful on the Sabbath day: for the Jews had allowance for these under the law; so have we now under the gospel.

3. Works of necessity and great conveniency, which could not be foreseen, nor provided against the day before, and cannot be delayed to another day: such as "fleeing from enemies, or defending ourselves against them; quenching of fire, dressing of meat, putting on our clothes," and the like; these are also lawful on the Sabbath. The Maccabees of old did not decline to fight on the Sabbath day, nor did the Jews long before their days; for the Jewish writers tell us, that the overthrow of Jericho was on the Sabbath; which also seems to be founded upon Josh. vi. 3, 4. where it is said, "They shall compass the city six days, and on the seventh day the walls of the city shall fall down, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him." Only take these cautions concerning such works: See that the necessity be real and not pretended, and that you have no secret complacency in its falling out. Take heed that it be not a necessity of your own bringing, and which you might have foreseen and prevented the week before. And, when you are doing these works of necessity and mercy, endeavour to keep your hearts in a spiritual

frame as much as you can, and study to do them without giving scandal or offence to others, and then despatch them as soon as possibly you can, that you may attend the main work of the day.

Quest. II. *What are these works and actions, then, from which we must rest and abstain upon the Sabbath?*

Ans. We must not only take special care this day to abstain from all such sinful works and actions as are unlawful upon any day; but we must also rest from all worldly business and actions, whether employments or recreations, although they be such as are lawful on other days. But, more particularly,

1. We must rest from all sorts of servile work or worldly employments, that tend to our profit or advantage; such as making of journeys, merchandizing, or travelling to markets, carrying of burdens, fishing, going of mills, ploughing, sowing, reaping, &c. and in a word, all parts of men's ordinary callings. See Nehem. xiii. 15, 16, 17. and downwards: "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine-grapes and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath." &c. The Jews were strictly prohibited to do any work this day, even the least work of any sort; manna must not be gathered, nor a few sticks to a fire; nay, the materials of the tabernacle must not be prepared this day, Exod. xxxi. nor any thing that might be delayed or done upon another day.—This cessation was shadowed forth by that river in Judea, called the Sabbatical river, because it dried up and ceased from running every Sabbath day: which not only Josephus speaks of, but also Pliny, Augustus Cesar in his letter to Tiberius, and others. Let none think that such a total cessation from secular business would tend to their worldly

disadvantage; for none were ever losers in this respect, by laying aside their own labours to attend God's worship and service upon his own day. As God took care of Israel's safety while they came up to Jerusalem three times a year, to attend the solemn feasts which he had instituted; so that at these times none of their enemies should make any attack upon them, or so much as desire their cities, according to his promise in Exod. xxxiv. 24.: so will that same God, by his kind and watchful providence, take care that his people sustain no damage in their worldly affairs, through their dutiful observation of this holy day. Nay, on the contrary, they have found this practice to be even profitable to them, with respect to their outward temporal estate. And there is good ground to think it will always be so; for the more conscientious any man is in sanctifying the Sabbath day, the greater blessing he may expect from God upon his labour on the six days; and it is not your own labour or toil, but the "blessing of God that maketh rich." Prov. x. 22. Judge Hale, and other godly persons, have attested the truth of this point from their own experience, as I have shewed before.

The Lord, in his word, is very peremptory and particular in enjoining this cessation from labour on the Sabbath; and because he knows the eagerness of men's hearts upon the world, and their readiness to encroach upon his holy day with their earthly labour, he condescends upon these seasons, wherein they have most temptation thereto, and requires them in "bearing time and in harvest," to rest on the Sabbath, Exod. xxxiv. 21. Though those be the times when we are most thronged with worldly business, yet he will have us in the midst thereof punctually to observe the Sabbath, and prefer the pleasure of communion with God in his ordinances, to the joys of harvest, and to expect that harvest-work will prosper the better for our religious observation of the Sabbath in harvest-time. Also the Lord specifies these seasons, because then we are under greater obligations to strict keeping of the Sabbath, than at other times; because,

1. The bodies of servants and cattle are more toiled then than at other times; and so have the more need of rest.

2. The people then have less time to worship God in their families and closets on week days, because of the

greatness of their labour; and therefore have need to improve the Sabbath the more diligently.

3. In harvest we partake more of the fruits of God's bounty, than at other times; and therefore should be the more thankful to God for his mercies, and especially for Christ, the mercy of mercies, who alone doth both purchase and sweeten all our mercies to us.

Now is it not matter of deep regret, that (notwithstanding God's special command, and our manifold obligations to the contrary,) our churches in many places should be thinner, and fields thronger with idle people wandering therein in time of harvest, than at other times of the year?

Object. "When the weather is unseasonable and tempestuous through the week, doth it not become a work of necessity to sow or reap on the Sabbath, for preserving of food to man and beast?"

Ans. If some particuler men's corns were in hazard of being carried away, or lost by the inundation of a river, or the like, it were a work of necessity to endeavour the preservation of them upon the Sabbath; because the dispensation is extraordinary, the case not common nor general, and the damage irrecoverable in any ordinary way. But as for sowing, reaping, or gathering in upon the Sabbath, (whatever be pretended from the season or weather for it) I judge it unlawful, because the case is common and general; the hazard proceeds from the ordinary providence of God; and there is ground to expect God's sending better weather, according to the gracious promise, which we ought not to distrust, Gen. ix. 22. "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest shall not cease." But if any distrust God's word, and encroach upon his holy day with their labour, let them consider that God can easily blast the works of their hands, and cast their business farther behind than their neighbours, who believe and wait upon the Lord. I have a certain account of a rich farmer in this nation, not many years ago, who in harvest time, (the weather having been very bad for some time before, and proving very fair and dry on Saturday and the Lord's day,) would needs cause his servants to yoke his horses, and fall to the leading of his corns upon the Sabbath evening: but it pleased the Lord that he soon got other work to do; for that very night his house and goods took fire, and so their labour was quick-

ly stopt, all hands being called to be employed in quenching of the fire. Many other instances might be given: but I proceed.

II. We must rest not only from all worldly employments on the sabbath, but also from all worldly recreations, according to the word of God, and our confession of faith and catechisms. But this point being much impugned and disputed by many, I shall handle it as distinctly and satisfyingly as I can.

Recreations are twofold, some are natural and necessary, such as the refreshing our bodies with meat, drink and sleep. These are recreations we cannot live or do business without, upon any day, and therefore are both lawful and necessary upon the Sabbath; especially since we are thereby better disposeed for performing the duties of the day. But,

2. There are recreations which are voluntary and not necessary, freely chosen by people for their bodily pleasure and diversion: such as sports, pastimes, or games, whether more public or more private, such as playing at cards, dice, chess, tables, &c.; or any sort of carnal music, such as whistling, singing, or playing on an instrument, or putting off the time with worldly converse, jesting, laughing, telling idle stories, walking and talking idly in the streets, or seeking our pleasure in the fields, though it be after public worship is over. Now, all such recreations being our own works, and for our own pleasure, and not subservient to the duties of God's worship, but hindrances thereto, are unlawful on the Sabbath day, as being expressly contrary to that rest required in the fourth command, and to that plain word, in Isa. lviii. 13, 14. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking thine own words:—Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob," &c. Now, can there be any thing more directly levelled against carnal recreations, idle talking, walking, &c. on the Sabbath day, than this is? "We must turn away our foot from doing our own pleasure on it," *i. e.* by

travelling or walking for pleasure or recreation; nay we must neither do our own ways, speak our own words, nor find our own pleasures on this day. But if people will, notwithstanding hereof, allow themselves in idle diversions and loose recreations upon the Sabbath, I see not how they will free themselves of open rebellion against God: for God commands us to remember the Sabbath day, not to delight ourselves by carnal recreations, but to keep it holy by divine exercises, and to spend it otherwise, is plainly to trample upon God's authority, and declare war against him.

Object. But those who are for the Sabbath day's recreations, will tell me, "that they condemn all such recreations in time of public worship, as well as we do: for the fourth command obliges us duly to attend public worship on the Sabbath, and forbear all worldly employments or recreations in time thereof; but, when that is once over, we may lawfully divert and recreate ourselves with such recreations as are modest and decent, and not unlawful for Christians on other days."

Ans. This supposes that the Sabbath lasts no longer than the public worship of the day, the contrary whereof I made evident before, and shall evince more fully afterwards. I shewed that we are obliged to keep holy the whole Sabbath day; not only the time of public worship, or from sun-rising to sun-setting, but the whole natural day, consisting of twenty-four hours: this being the seventh part of our time, and of the week, it is the Lord's, and consecrated for his use and service; and consequently no part of it is to be alienated from him, or applied for our pleasures or recreations.

I shall further confirm this truth by some more arguments.

1. If it was unlawful for God's people under the the Old Testament, to spend any part of the Sabbath in carnal pleasures and recreations, it is unlawful for us also under the New: but the former is true; and therefore the latter. That such recreations were prohibited to the Jews, I believe none will deny, that is either acquainted with their ancient rules and constitutions, or that reads and believes the scriptures, particularly the fourth command, and Isa. lvii. 13. forecited. All that remains for me to prove is, that we are bound to abstain from those recreations upon the Sabbath, as well as the Jews; which I do thus:—Whatever the Jews

were obliged to upon moral reasons and grounds, that we are bound to as much as they: but the Jews were bound to abstain from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, upon moral grounds, which concerns us as well as them. I shewed before, that the reasons of the fourth command are moral, and reach Christians as well as Jews: I mentioned five of them, and truly every one of them levels as much against worldly recreations on the Sabbath day, as against worldly employments: I shall not resume them all here, but only insist a little on two of them.

1. God's liberality in allowing us six days for our own use: This reason binds us as much as the Jews, to consecrate one day to the Lord for his service. God hath given as gracious discoveries of his bounty to us as to them; and shall we be so ungenerous or ungrateful, as to encroach upon God's time, or rob him of any part of it, more than they? The very light of nature, and principles of sound reason, besides the command of God, plead strongly for this: That, since the Lord hath liberally given us six days for our use we should, without grudge, give him one day for his service; and, since he gives us six whole days, it continues morally just and rational, that we should give him his one day whole too, and that we should spend as much of his day in holy duties as is ordinarily allowed on other days for servile labour, and that is the whole day, except what is allowed for necessary bodily refreshments, viz. eating and sleeping.

The 2d ground I shall insist on is, the Lord's propriety in the Sabbath, or in one day in seven. This reason binds us as much as it did the Jews; the Lord's right to a day in seven, is the same that it ever was, otherwise the morality of the fourth command is not the same; but I have already demonstrated the contrary. The Christian Sabbath is called the Lord's day, as well as the Jewish Sabbath was called "the holy of the Lord," Isa. lviii. 13. to shew that his propriety and title is the same. And it is observable, that the Lord in that one verse, calls it twice his holy day; and it is from this that the Lord takes the principal argument, which he there uses against carnal recreations on the Sabbath; "Ye shall not speak your own words, nor find your own pleasures on this day. Why? It is my holy day, the holy of the Lord: the seventh part of the week is mine

unalterably, set apart for holy uses, consecrated for my holy service. This argument is moral, and perpetually obliges all men, Christians as much as Jews. For, if a day in seven be dedicated to God, certainly every part of it, yea, the whole of it, belongs to him; and to alienate any part of it to our own use or pleasures, is sacrilege, and a direct infringement of the morality of the fourth command. The Lord tells us, Levit. xxvii. 28. "That every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord." Here is a day both by God and man, solemnly and perpetually devoted to the Lord; and accordingly the Lord, Isa. lviii. 13. asserts his just right and title to it, and twice in one breath calls it his holy day, and, upon this account, prohibits carnal recreations upon it. And must it not be great presumption for any creature, to venture deliberately to rob his Creator of his just property, and put that which is holy, and solemnly consecrated to God, to common use? Remember what Solomon says, Prov. xx. 25. "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry:" It is a snare, *i. e.* it is a most dangerous thing, it brings heavy guilt, even God's curse and vengeance, upon the man that doth so. Thus you see how the morality and unalterable reasons of the fourth command restrain Christians from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, as much as the Jews. The standing and perpetual rule, which God hath there laid down, can never be altered to the world's end: still God hath one day, and man hath six; but if we take any part of God's day to our own use, more than the works of necessity and mercy require, then we have more than our six, and God hath less than his one, which is contrary to the command. Moreover, if it be in the power of man to alienate any part of this day from God, why not the whole of it? and so the Sabbath might come to be wholly abolished, which is absurd.

Object. 1. "The memory of Christ's resurrection on the Lord's day, calls us to more joy and gladness upon our Sabbath than the Jews were called to upon theirs."

Ans. This says nothing for carnal sports or recreations. It is not a worldly joy, but a spiritual joy that we are called to this day; such a joy as is expressed in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Again, if our mercies be this day greater than those the Jews had to commemorate, then we

are in gratitude obliged to a more strict and holy sanctification of the day, to the honour and glory of the God and fountain of our mercies; which, I believe, no serious Christian will think carnal recreations very consistent with.

Object. 2. "But these recreations are no where forbidden in the New Testament."

Ans. It is sufficient if they be forbidden in the Old Testament; for the Old Testament is our rule as much as the New, in actions which are moral, or not ceremonial; and I see not what shadow of ground there is for calling abstinence from carnal pleasures on the Sabbath, a thing ceremonial, or less binding upon us than the Jews. But moreover, if we compare the 58th chapter of Isaiah with the 56th, it will manifestly appear, that the Lord, in enjoining his people strictly to observe the Sabbath, and abstain from carnal pleasures thereon, hath a respect to gospel times after the Messiah's coming. Isaiah was a most evangelical prophet, and still had the gospel-times in his eye; wherefore some call him the Evangelist Isaiah: so that in recommending Sabbath sanctification, and calling the Sabbath God's holy day, he doth not confine himself to the Jewish Sabbath, which was soon to be abolished; but hath an eye to the evangelical Sabbath, which was to continue to the end of the world.

Again, this is confirmed by the practice of the primitive Christians: they thought it unlawful to spend any part of the Lord's day in unnecessary diversions from holy things; yea, they accounted the strict sanctification of this day the prime character of a true saint. Augustine saith, "It is not enough that we keep three or four hours of this day, but that we observe the whole day." The ancient Christians did not think the work of the day was over, when the public worship was ended. The younger Pliny tells us, "That they used this day to meet before day-light, and sing their hymns to Christ." And Tertullian, in his apology, makes mention of their night prayers. They thought themselves bound to begin the work of the day so early, because Christ rose this morning before the break of day. They neither thought nor pleaded that they had more freedom for worldly pleasures, or were less obliged to holy exercises this day, than the Jews upon their Sabbath.

Nay, if we consider things narrowly, it will be found,

that Christians are under greater obligations to a strict and holy sanctification of the Sabbath under the gospel, than the Jews were under the law, for several reasons.

1. We have not only the creation, as the Jews had, but we have also the redemption of mankind, which is a greater work, this day to commemorate. Now, if the Jews were obliged to celebrate the day which was instituted for the memory of the creation, by a total abstinence from worldly employments and recreation; much more are we bound to a strict sanctification of the day which is instituted for commemorating of both creation and redemption. We have far greater mercies to commemorate this day than the Jews had, viz. "The redeeming love of a crucified Jesus, and his glorious victory over death and hell;" and consequently have greater work and employment, and ought to be the more active and busy in doing of it; and also more delightful work, and therefore should be the less inclined to weary or sit up in it.

2. We have a far more pleasant and excellent manner of worship to perform upon the Sabbath, than the Jews had. This worship was attended with manifold rites, washings, and sacrifices, which were both chargeable and toilsome to their bodies; but ours is spiritual, pleasant and easy.

3. The Jews had many other festival days to observe, by a strict and holy rest, beside the Sabbath; but, under the gospel, God hath freed us from the yoke of all other festivals, and hath instituted none but the Lord's day, which. in gratitude, we ought to observe more strictly and religiously than the Jews.

4. By baptism, we come under more strict and solemn engagements to keep God's commandments, than the Jews, and also we have more spe ial promises of his Spirit to help us in keeping of them, than the Jews had; for, in the New Testament times, the Spirit is poured out in a larger measure than in the Old.

So that from the whole I infer, that if the Jews under the Old Testament were bound to keep the whole Sabbath day, and wholly to abstain from their own pleasures upon it, yea, count the service of the Sabbath a delight, according to Isa. lviii. 13. though in itself it was burdensome: much more ought we, under the gospel, to keep the whole Sab-

bath strictly, and call it a delight, when the work and service of it is so pleasant and easy.

II. Another argument which I shall bring against the foresaid Sabbath day's recreations, shall be taken from the nature and greatness of the Sabbath day's work; and I shall form it thus:

If the work of the Sabbath be so necessary, weighty, and various, that it requires the whole day to be spent therein, and challenges all our soul's faculties to be employed thereabout; then carnal recreations are unlawful thereupon:

But the former is true; therefore, &c.

The connexion of the Major proposition is evident; for, that which is weighty and necessary ought always to take place of that which is not so.

As for the minor proposition, that the work of the Sabbath is so great and necessary, it is plain, if we consider that the Sabbath is the great market day of heaven; upon which we ought to take in and lay up provision for our souls for the rest of the week, yea, for eternity itself. It is the usual day of sinners' conversion and acquaintance with God: It is the day wherein we have our sins to bewail, our needs to get supplied, our hard hearts to get melted, our dead affections to get raised, our guilty conscience to get disburdened, our dark minds to get enlightened, our weak graces to get strengthened. We have this day God's word to teach our families, our children to instruct, Christ's love to commemorate, death and judgment to provide for, and our Redeemer to treat with about the saving of our souls. In a word, this is a day wherein we are to make visits to God, and receive visits from him. Now, I do appeal to every serious soul that knows any thing of real godliness, if these things be not so weighty and necessary as to challenge the whole of the day, and the attendance of all our powers and faculties: and if so, then we are bound carefully to avoid every thing that may prove an avocation or diversion from doing them.

III. Another argument may run thus:

If the worldly circumstances of the generality be such as they can have but little time through the week for worshipping God, minding their souls, and preparing for eternity; then it is their duty closely and diligently to employ

the Lord's day for these ends, in which God grants them freedom for the same:

But the former is true; therefore, &c.

The connexion of the major proposition is certain; for, if our whole lives be little enough for accomplishing the great work of our salvation, the seventh day, or seventh part of our time, is never to be thought too much.

And for the truth of the minor proposition, that the circumstances of the generality are such as above represented, I do appeal to the experience of the whole country where we live. How many poor men are there every where, tradesmen, tenants, servants, workmen, &c. whose worldly poverty and necessities are so great and many, that they can scarce get so much spare time from their work and labour through the week, as is sufficient for eating and sleeping? They are commonly so toiled through the day, that at night they are hardly fit for any thing but sleep. Now what time have these through the week for holy duties and religious exercises? What time for reading and praying, and learning the principles of Christianity? But since God is graciously pleased to give them the Sabbath, in which they may retire from the world, and employ themselves wholly in the foresaid religious concerns; have they not the greatest need, closely and diligently to spend and improve the whole Sabbath therein, without any kind of unnecessary diversion from the same.

Are there not many poor servants, whose masters are so severe, that they will not allow them half an hour in a day to serve God, or mind their souls; and should they not greedily lay hold on the opportunity of the Sabbath for these ends, and let no part of this blessed day pass away idly? Now, for ministers or others to tell such, that the whole Sabbath day is too long for the foresaid spiritual exercises, and teach them to spend away part of it in carnal recreations or idleness, in my opinion, is a most compendious way to promote atheism, ignorance and profanity amongst them. And doth not daily experience confirm this sad truth? Do we not see, that profaning the Sabbath opens a door to all profanity? and that in those places where people neglect the Sabbath, or spend the half of the day in recreations and idleness, there ignorance and immorality of all sorts abound, and family worship and piety are neglected; where-

as, on the contrary, in those places where the whole Sabbath is closely observed, and recreations discouraged, there we see Christian knowledge, morality, the fear of God, and family godliness, do flourish and prosper? Occular experience shews us, that the fourth command is a hedge about all the rest; and the religious observation of the whole Sabbath day, is the most effectual method for promoting Christian knowledge and universal piety. People may hear a sermon or two on a Sabbath, and yet lie still in their ignorance, if they spend the rest of the day in idleness and recreations, and neglect the private means of reading, praying, catechising, conference, repetition of sermons, &c. I never expect to see knowledge or piety flourish in congregations or families, till these means be used, and pains taken, after public worship is over, to instruct children and servants. O! doth not the lamentable ignorance of many poor souls plead aloud for the strict and diligent observation of the whole Lord's day? Had ministers and others a due sense of the misery and perishing state of ignorant souls, I am sure they would press it more, and never set up to teach them carnal recreations on this day.

O poor men, servants and labourers, in the name of God I exhort you to spend more of God's day in heaven's work. You have little time through the week for it; therefore God, in pity to your souls, looses you this day from your weekly work, and cries to you from on high, "come up hither;" lay aside the thoughts of things below, and "set your affections on things above." As your bodies rest this day from labour, let your souls think on eternal rest in heaven, and use all the appointed means for attending to it.

IV. A fourth argument I make use of is this:

If God prohibits worldly employments on the Sabbath, then certainly he discharges carnal recreations:

But the former is true, therefore, &c.

The minor proposition is undeniable: so that all I have to prove is the connexion of the major proposition, which may be easily done thus: The great reason of prohibiting worldly employments on the Sabbath is, because they hinder the holy employment of the soul, and would interrupt the duties of the Sabbath. But if carnal recreations do hinder the duties of the Sabbath, and spiritual employment of the soul, as much as servile labour; then by parity of

reason they are forbidden also: but so it is, that they do hinder as much, yea, more than servile labour would do. Nay, I may be bold to say, that a man may be more serious, and have his mind more exercised with heavenly meditations, when plowing, sowing, or threshing, than when he is about carnal entertainments, recreations, or pastimes; or when he is in vain promiscuous company, jesting, sporting, and telling stories, or walking and talking idly in the streets or fields. These do far more distract the heart from God's service, than servile labour doth. A man will find himself more indisposed for prayer and holy duties after them, than after the works of his calling. It was the sense of this that made Augustine say, "That it were better for maids to spin, or for men to plow, than for them to dance and sport on the Sabbath day. *Quanto melieus est arare quam saltare in Sabbato.*" Aug. *in titulum* Psal. xcii. He very well knew, that carnal pleasures are inconsistent with devotion, and wholly unfit the soul for communion with God, which is the work of the Sabbath. Hence we see, lovers of pleasure, and lovers of God, are set in opposition, 2 Tim. iii. 4.

I might go on to multiply arguments to this purpose; but this truth is so clear from sound reason and the word of God, and particularly from Isa. lviii, 13. to such as believe the scriptures, that I think it almost needless to say any more.

But, in regard this truth hath many adversaries, (and no wonder though Satan muster up all his forces against it, since it levels so directly against his kingdom,) I shall endeavour to answer the chief objections brought against it.

Particularly, there is one J. S. who calls himself a Presbyter of the Episcopal church of Scotland, that in his pamphlets upon the Sabbath, lately published, pleads for the Sabbath day's recreations, both as lawful and dutiful, after the public worship is over; providing, (as he qualifies them,) there be nothing immodest or indecent therein, nor too much time spent thereby: though he neither tells how much time he allows for them, nor what are the immodest or indecent things which he disallows in them; but leaves every man to his own construction and choice therein.

I shall consider the strength of the arguments adduced by him and others, for these recreations; and I shall begin with the chief one.

Object. I. "To hinder these recreations after sermon, were to tie us, who are the disciples of Christ, to as strict a rest, and as burthensome an observation of the Sabbath, as the Jews were obliged to under the law, which were to judaize, and build that again which Christ hath destroyed."

Ans. 1. The fourth command being moral and perpetual, as hath been proven, doth oblige us to as strict a rest and cessation from worldly actions, as it did the Jews. I grant indeed, the Pharisees invented a great many superstitious additions to the rest of the Sabbath, which were not of divine appointment, and would have had all to conform thereto, as if they had been divine laws. They assigned such a precise space for a Sabbath-day's journey; they frequently would not allow the relieving of men's bodies and beasts in distress this day. Some came this length, that though they allowed beasts to be fed or watered, yet, if any of them fell into a ditch, they must not draw him out on this day, but feed him where he was till the Sabbath was over. Nay, I have read of Jews so ridiculously superstitious, that they would not allow themselves to be drawn out of pits or dangerous places into which they had fallen on the Sabbath, and therefore have smarted with death for their folly. Some held that it was unlawful to kill a flea, take the skin off an apple, or do any thing of that kind on the Sabbath day. Nay, farther, they taught, that it was unlawful to defend themselves against their enemies this day; by which means they sometimes became a prey to their enemies: till Mattathias the priest better instructed them, as we are told by Josephus, and the author of the first book of the Maccabees.

I say, these were nothing but human additions; for the same things were lawful to the Jews on the Sabbath, that are allowed to us, viz. the works of piety, necessity and mercy; as manifestly appears by the commentary which Christ gives upon this command, both by his words and actions. Christ defends his practice in healing, and his disciples in plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath; and shews, that the works of necessity and mercy, the relieving of men and beasts in distress, were lawful on the Sabbath. Our blessed Saviour, by his reasoning against the Pharisees on this subject, intends only to reprove their superstitious additions, and to shew what things were lawful to

the Jews on the Sabbath from the beginning, but not what things are now lawful to us under the gospel; for he gives no more liberty for worldly things this day than what was before; since he "came not to destroy the law."

2. I grant, indeed, that our Saviour hath freed Christians under the gospel, from the Jewish method of celebrating the Sabbath, by a typical service and ceremonial worship, consisting of sacrifices, washings, and manifold rites, which were a burdensome yoke. Now, to reintroduce abrogated ceremonies on the Sabbath, is, I confess, to judaize, and rebuild what Christ hath destroyed; and whoever are chargeable with this in any degree, let them see to it. But what man will call abstaining from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, an abrogated Jewish ceremony? or compare the strict sanctification of the Lord's day, by the pleasant evangelical sacrifices of prayer and praise, to the burdensome method of observing the Jewish Sabbath? Christ hath told us, that his "yoke is easy, and his burden is light;" and all his experienced disciples will set their seal to the truth of it.

For my part, I do not see how a man can own the morality and unalterable obligation of the fourth command, and not grant that we are as strictly tied to moral duties on the Sabbath as the Jews, and consequently to the same holy rest, and diligence in the service of God upon it; since the change made by Christ's coming is only in circumstantial or ceremonial things, viz. the day of the week, and the nature of the service or sacrifice requisite upon it.

Object. "But, besides the nature of the service and worship, there were several peculiar things required of the Jews upon the Sabbath, not binding upon us; particularly, concerning the not dressing of meat, going out of the place, kindling of fire, bearing of burdens, the nature of the punishment of Sabbath breaking, double sacrifices," &c.

Ans. 1. If any of the foresaid things were typical or ceremonial, then indeed it is abrogated by Christ's coming, and not binding upon us: But this will nowise alter the case with respect to abstaining from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, which can never be reckoned typical or ceremonial; it being what is perpetually moral, and necessary to the suitable sanctification of this holy day, in all ages of the world.

2. Let the foresaid instances be narrowly considered, and it will be found that there is no such peculiar thing therein as is commonly imagined.

I. As to dressing of meat on the Sabbath, the only place whence the prohibition of it is inferred, is Exod. xvi. 23. concerning the preparing of manna. There are several interpreters, who think that the dressing of it on the Sabbath is not here forbid; but that they are there ordered to lay up a part of it undressed for the Sabbath. But granting, as the most part of interpreters do, that the dressing of the manna is there discharged, this will not infer a discharge of dressing any kind of meat on the Sabbath; since there were some things peculiar to the manna, beyond other meat: For,

1. There was a particular promise made concerning it, that was not made concerning other kinds of food, viz. That it should not spoil nor corrupt: for in that hot country, dressed meat could not easily be preserved good and wholesome over night.

2. There was much more servile work requisite in preparing manna than other kinds of food; it behoved to be "grinded in mills, beat in mortars, and baken in pans," Num. xi. 8. Now, so much servile labour about preparing of food was not fit upon the Sabbath, since it did not tend to the rest or refreshing of the body, but rather to the toiling of it; and likewise it took up many hands, and would have hindered them from sanctifying of the day. So that there is no peculiarity in this prohibition; for, were we in their case, and had manna to feed on, it were not lawful for us to prepare it on the Sabbath, more than for the Jews: But it is certain that they did dress other meat on the Sabbath, that required not much servile labour. Only we are taught by this prohibition, as well as the Jews, to be careful to prepare that meat, which requires much toil and pains, before the Sabbath come; and so to order matters about our bodily provisions the day before, that servants may be as little hindered from sanctifying the Sabbath, and the work of the day as little interrupted as possible.

II. As to the second instance, the prohibition of "going out of their places on the Sabbath," Exod. xvi. 29. it is plain from the context, that it is to be understood of going out to seek manna, it being an unnecessary servile work,

LIBRARY
LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM
EXPOSITION PARK

and therefore unlawful on the Sabbath day. For though the Jews were restrained from going through the streets or fields on the Sabbath, for worldly business, recreations, or putting off the time; yet not from all walking or travelling, when either the works of piety or necessity did require: for a "Sabbath-day's journey" was allowed, Acts i. 12. The Pharisees indeed stinted it to two thousand cubits, (which some make one mile, others two, according to the different cubits in use among them) in regard this was to be the distance of the utmost part of the camp of Israel in the wilderness, from the tabernacle, to which they were bound to repair for worship on the Sabbath day. But this was no good warrant for limiting the Sabbath day's journey to such a precise space; since it must be either more or less, according to the distance of people's dwellings from the public ordinances, to attend which a person may go many miles, and not profane the Sabbath. The Shunammitish woman, as appears from 2 Kings iv. 23. used to travel on the Sabbath to the prophet Elisha, to attend public worship, and wait on his teaching.

III. As to the prohibition of kindling fire, Exod. xxxv. 3. if we consider the place and context, we will find that it is only kindling of fire for servile work, particularly for the work of rearing up the tabernacle, that they were then about, which is there forbidden. This is the mind of Vatablus, Junius, and Termellius, and the best commentators on the place. For God is here giving directions for making the tabernacle; and, to prevent their thinking, that the nature of the work, or haste required in doing it, would justify their working at it on the Sabbath, he first discharges all working on that day, verse 2. and then more particularly, v. 3. he forbids the work of kindling fire, as that of smiths, founders, or any others, for preparing materials for the tabernacle. And so he will have that work, though for a sacred use, give place to that which was more immediately sacred and necessary, viz. the present sanctification of the Sabbath. This doth not prohibit kindling of fire for the works of necessity or mercy which presently tend to the better sanctifying of the Sabbath; since this, for the servile work of the tabernacle, would have hindered the present sanctification of it; whereas kindling of fire for warming our bodies, preparing meat, or for shewing light, do not hinder, but tend to promote the sanctifying of the Sabbath.

Yet we should take care that we do not extend our liberty this way too far, so as to make solemn feasts on the Sabbath, which require much servile work, and hinder the duties of the Sabbath: for though we be not forbidden on the Lord's day to kindle a fire for dressing meat, yet we must beware we make not such a flame as shall kindle the fire of God's wrath against us on that day.

IV. As to the bearing of burdens on the Sabbath, Christ hath given no more liberty to us this way, than to the Jews; for though he commanded the impotent man on the Sabbath, John v. 10 "to take up his bed and walk," yet this was no carrying of a burden for any secular design, but a mean required for glorifying of God, and publishing the miracle.

V. As to their punishing of Sabbath-breaking with death, Numbers xv. this belonged to the judicial law, which was peculiar to the Jewish commonwealth, and doth not bind other nations, except so much of it as is of universal moral equity: for the peculiar circumstances of nations require peculiar statutes and punishments for some particular crimes. But, in the next place, there appears to have been some speciality in that Sabbath-breaker's case; for we do not find that Sabbath breaking was always so punished afterwards. If we read verses 30, and 31. we see God threatening death to all such as sin presumptuously, and with an high hand: and in the very next verse, the Sabbath-breaker is brought in guilty; which makes it probable, that his crime was attended with the aggravation of presumptuous sinning.

VI. As to the double sacrifices required on the Sabbath "two lambs in the morning, and two in the evening," Numb. xxviii. 9. 10. I grant they were a heavy burden, in regard of the great expense and bodily toil the Jews were put to thereby, from which Christ hath happily freed us. But, excepting what was typical and ceremonial in their worship and sacrifices, there is nothing here peculiar to them; for otherwise we are still as much bound to double sacrifices on the Sabbath as the Jews: We are bound to double our devotion, our prayers, our praises, &c. this day, beyond other days. Yea, as I shewed before, we are more called to it than the Jews; which also is confirmed from Ezek. xlvi. 4. 5. where, instead of the four lambs required

on the Sabbath in Moses's time, we see that in Ezekiel's temple-service, which points at gospel times, the Sabbath offerings were to be "six lambs and a ram;" intimating not only the continuance, but the advancement of the Sabbath sanctification in the days of the Messiah, and that Christians should exceed the Jews in zeal and diligence in keeping of the Sabbath, and should multiply duties, and offer up a greater plenty of spiritual sacrifices, and be more active and intense about the works of the Sabbath, than they were. And good reason for it, since we have both the creation and redemption to commemorate this day, and a more exellent worship to perform upon it.

But I proceed to examine the rest of J. S's arguments for Sabbath-day's recreations.

Object. II. "Our Saviour saith, that the Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath," Mark ii. 27.

Ans. This word makes not for his purpose; for Christ adduceth it in defence of his disciples "plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath." for satisfying their hunger, which was a work of necessity; and not in defence of carnal diversions and recreations.

But, that we may take up the true meaning of the place, we must consider, that if by Sabbath be understood the true sanctification of the day by sincere worshipping and serving of God, then certainly man was made for it: but if Sabbath be taken, according to the Pharisees' sense here, for the mere external rest of the day, (as Christ certainly understands it in this place,) then indeed the Sabbath was made for man; this external rest being but a mean for the true sanctification of the Sabbath, and designed for the special good of man, partly that his body might have some repose from labour, and chiefly that he might have a solemn opportunity to worship God, and hold communion with him. Now, says our Saviour, it were unreasonable to think that a law, intended for a privilege and benefit to man, should be improven to his hurt and ruin. The great design of the Sabbath pleads for "works of necessity and mercy;" for how can God be served, or the soul profited on this day, if care be not taken for preserving the life, and supporting the body, in order thereto? But how this text makes for carnal diversions on the Sabbath, I see not; unless one should say, that Christ meant when he said, "The

Sabbath is made for man," that it is made for his corporal pleasures; which is most absurd, and directly contrary to Isa. viii. 13.

Object. III. "The hindering of men from Sabbath-days recreations, is an encroachment upon our Christian liberty."

Ans. I would gladly know what he means by Christian liberty. I take the gospel sense of it to be this, that Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel, not only liberty from the dominion, guilt, and punishment of sin, the bondage of Satan, and sting of death; but also hath liberated them from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Old Testament saints were subjected; and likewise from the curse of the moral law; yea, and from the power and obligation of it too, as a covenant of works; so as they are neither to be justified nor condemned thereby. But that he hath obtained any liberty to us from the obligation of the moral law, as the rule of life and manners, more than the Jews had, I know no orthodox Protestant that will assert it. Now, if the fourth command be a part of the moral law, (as J. S. owns) to pretend to any freedom from the strict observation of it, and what is truly moral in it, under the gospel, is unchristian licentiousness, and not Christian liberty. Christ never purchased a liberty to us, to be less religious, or less diligent in prayer, praises, and other duties, than the Jews; for this were no true liberty. Our true liberty lies in a readiness to obey the holy will of God, our only rightful Lord; and in being in a capacity to pursue our chief good and great end; and the more we are disabled from this, the more we are in bondage. And hence it is, that the Psalmist saith, Psal. cxix. 45. "I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts." But for any, under pretence of Christian liberty, to walk loosely and licentiously, is to destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, "That being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life," Luke i. 74, 75.

Object. IV. "The restraining these recreations is not a good politic for promoting godliness; for instead of this, it drives people to the other extreme."

Ans. 1. Though it were a good politic, I am sure it is

bad divinity: for, we must not do evil, that good may come of it.

2. It is no new thing for men's lusts and corruptions to grow more impetuous, and be the more irritated, by the restraints and prohibitions of God's holy and just laws, Rom. vii. 8. Yet no Christian ever pleaded that these laws should be either dispensed with or slackened upon this account; but still owned the fault to be in our own corrupt natures, and not in God's excellent laws. If all these precepts were to be dispensed with that are grating to the lusts of carnal men, then few of them would be binding; for every spiritual duty is unpleasant to them.

3. If inquiry be made into the state of the flocks of those ministers who use this politic, I apprehend it will be found to have but very bad success in promoting godliness, or even morality, either on Sabbath or week day. Nay, on the contrary, these Sabbath-days recreations will be found a politic of hell, wherever the experiment is tried, for banishing piety, and promoting all sorts of profanity. Whereas, in these places where they are conscientiously suppressed, Sabbath-holiness, family-worship, and true piety, are known to be in a flourishing condition.

4. If magistrates and ministers would cordially join hands in the execution of civil and ecclesiastical laws against Sabbath-breaking and profaneness, the imperious eruptions of men's lusts on the Sabbath would soon, through the blessing of God, be effectually dammed up and restrained. A resolute resisting of the devil, is the best way to overcome him; whereas, yielding to him in any degree, is the ready way to be vanquished by him.

Object. V. "The Christian Sabbath (saith J. S.) is a festival, and consequently solacing ourselves by a cheerful and mutual conversation together in our houses on that day (if there be nothing immodest or indecent thereon, not too much time spent thereby) is not only lawful, but dutiful also."

Ans. 1. I suppose he meant the convening of friends and neighbours to carnal feasts and entertainments on the Sabbath, and holding good fellowship together, after the manner of the world: for, if he meant any other conversation, I think he would not caution against the spending of too

much time therein; for there is little need of any such caution with respect to spiritual conversation. Alas, there is little time spent therein: J. S. had employed his pen much better, if he had recommended this sort of conversation on the Sabbath: for that of a carnal sort, people are apt enough to learn it without a teacher.

2. I freely own the Lord's day to be a festival, but it is for the soul, not for the body. This is the day in which Christians are brought into the banqueting house; but the fare is celestial, the dainties spiritual. On this day they are feasted and filled, but it is with the fatness of God's house, and the rivers of his pleasures: this day they are made joyful, but not with carnal joy and mirth; the pleasures are spiritual, the joy is divine. I do not say that this day ought to be kept as a fast-day for afflicting the body; no, it is necessary the body should be seasonably refreshed and supported, that it may be serviceable to the soul in the work of the day, and service of God, and may call the Sabbath a delight, rejoice in God's goodness, and be cheerful in the celebration of the love and praises of our Redeemer. But to say that set feasts, carnal entertainments, and good fellowship, are proper duties on the Lord's day, is strange doctrine; for then I see not how carnal mirth and jollity can be excluded: and so God's holy day shall be turned into a carnival, destructive to the blessed ends and designs of it. Modest and honest provision for our tables on the Lord's day, is what I do not discommend: but I say, "Set feasts, sumptuous entertainments, and too liberal partaking of the creatures, are not proper on this day; in regard they are apt to indispose us for the duties of the day, by rendering the body dull and sluggish, and inclining us to drowsiness and sleep;" as also, the preparing of them doth detain servants from the ordinances, and divert them both from public and private duties necessary for the sanctifying of the Sabbath. It is observable of our blessed pattern Jesus Christ, that though he frankly went into the houses of Pharisees, and others on week days, when invited; yet on the Sabbath day, it is only said, he went into one of their houses to eat bread, Luke xiv. 1. that is, to take such moderate refreshment as was suitable for that day, and for the work of it, teaching us, that on this day, we should, like Moses and Jethro, with the elders of Israel, Exod xviii. 12. "eat bread before God," *i. e.* with a deep sense of his all-

seeing eye, and special caution against all manner of excess, or any thing that may indispose us for holy duties.

Moreover, observe what manner of conversation Christ had at this Sabbath-day's refreshment: He indeed solaced himself and the company with a mutual and cheerful conversation, but it was wholly spiritual and heavenly, concerning the feast provided for us in the gospel. This was suitable Sabbath-day's conversation, that needed not J. S's caution against spending too much time therein.

But J. S. is so zealous for those Sabbath-days recreations and entertainments, that he is not content to prove the lawfulness of them, but he will have them binding on us as necessary duties. But I would fain know how any man will prove the dutifulness of them: Pray where is the command for them? where is the advantage of them? wherein do they promote the great ends of the Sabbath, God's glory and our soul's edification? I think I have clearly proven the contrary. I shall only add this word; I make a supposition, that a poor soul is brought under a law work, or deep convictions, like the jailer, by means of the sermons on the Lord's-day: will any man say, that it would be his duty presently after, to go to these feasts, entertainments and recreations, and thereby hinder or quench the operations of God's Spirit on his soul? I would rather think it his duty to retire from the world and company, to prayer and self-examination, in order to entertain and cherish the Spirit's work on his heart.

Object. VI. "But these recreations and entertainments will not hinder the sanctification of the Sabbath, but rather help to quicken and prepare us for our succeeding devotions."

Ans. I am persuaded that those who exercise themselves to godliness, and are acquainted with the power of it, will not talk so; nay, they will tell, from their sad experience, that the meeting of promiscuous companies on the Lord's day, for carnal entertainments, vain talking, walking, and sporting, are so far from fitting us for after devotions or spiritual exercises, that they directly tend to deaden the heart, suppress convictions, quench any warmness of affections and liveliness of frame wrought in us by the public ordinances, and so render us the more indisposed for spiritual employments. Instead of quickening and disposing our

minds for returning to God's worship, they do the more increase our averseness thereto. Experienced Christians can tell, that private meditation, reading, or Christian conference, are far better means to fit us for our evening devotions on the Lord's day, than carnal recreations.

Object. VII. "Some intermission for recreation is needful; for we cannot be employed in spiritual exercises a whole day: This would be a great toil to the spirit, especially of such who have been sore toiled with servile labour through the week; nay, the best are ready to faint and weary in the continued exercise of piety."

Ans. 1. The extent of God's precepts is not to be measured by our ability or inability; neither can our impotency to give obedience to God's commands, in the least invalidate or weaken the authority thereof.

2. By the same argument, the Jews might have pleaded, that they were not bound to rest the whole Sabbath, nor spend the whole day in religious exercises; for they were liable to the same infirmities that are incident to us.

3. I frankly allow what refreshment is necessary for supporting nature, and for the better performance of the duties of the Sabbath; but, for the aforesaid carnal diversions, they are so far from being necessasy for furthering the work of the Sabbath, that they are great hindrances thereto.

4. If labouring people need recreation for their bodies, then let them have some time or week days for it.—If for their minds, I know no such fit recreation as the joyful commemoration of the love of Christ, and our redemption from hell and wrath through his blood, and the cheerful singing the praises of our Maker and Redeemer, which is the very work of the Sabbath. Is it not a recreation for Christ's sheep to feed in his green pastures, and to be led by him beside the still waters? to behold the waters of life, clear as crystal, flowing betwixt the banks of ordinances? to get a pleasant prospect from mount Nebo, of the promised land? Is it not a recreation for a condemned man, to come and hear his pardon pronounced? for a hungry man to get pleasant food and heavenly dainties? for a sick man to get all his diseases healed? Must it not be a carnal and stupid heart, that will call these a burden or weariness? There are many who weary not to spend whole days at markets, in

buying and selling; nay, whole days and nights in gaming and drinking: And, will you call a day spent in such pleasant and refreshful work a toil, which is the highest privilege of a rational creature? Surely, no workman can be so glad of a day's ease from his sore labour, as a believer should be to have a day's release from his worldly business, that he may freely and entirely converse with his God and Saviour, and rejoice in his bounty and redeeming love.

5. Every Sabbath we meet with many unavoidable interruptions, which take us off from the duties of God's worship, though we go not to contrive unnecessary diversions and recreations for this end. There is much of every Sabbath spent in preparing food, dressing and feeding our bodies, going to the church, and returning from it, attending children, cattle, &c. O how many are our avocations and intermissions in serving our Creator and Redeemer on the Lord's day, which we cannot shun! And shall we think the rest of the day too much for this important work, that we must go seek carnal diversions to drive it away?

6. I grant, the best are ready to grow weary of duty, because of the aversion of our corrupt nature to that which is good; but carnal recreations will never cure this aversion, nor overcome that weariness, but will certainly indulge and increase the same. The best way to cure weariness (next to the grace of God) is practice and experience in religion, and sincere wrestling and striving against it. Resisting overcomes it; but giving way to it doth increase it.

7. The Lord knows the carnality and weariness that our hearts are naturally prone to in the work of the Sabbath; wherefore, for remedy thereof, he hath graciously appointed variety of exercises on the Sabbath-day, that, when we weary of one, another may be our recreation. Are you weary of hearing? then recreate yourselves with prayer: If of that, then recreate yourselves with singing of God's praises: If of that, then recreate yourselves in reading God's word, and other good books: If of that, then recreate yourselves with meditation: If you weary of that, then recreate yourselves with Christian conference, repeating the sermons, instructing your families, &c. If you weary of public duties, then go to private; if of these, go to secret duties. Is there not here a delightful variety of pleasant spiritual employments, sufficient to recreate ourselves with

for one day, without needing the help of any sensual diversion, to put off the precious time of this blessed day? How think you to spend a whole eternity in spiritual exercises, when you weary so much of one day? Whatever carnal men think, I am sure a godly soul will be far from counting this work a burden. Hearing and reading the scriptures is a far less burden to him, than recreations and pastimes would be; for God's "testimonies are his delight, and he rejoices in them more than in all riches," Psalm cxix. Yea, nothing in the world is such a burden to him on the Sabbath as his ill heart, his little delight in the Sabbath, and shortcomings in the duties thereof; and nothing such a pleasure and recreation to him, as when he can win above these, and get his heart lifted up in the ways of the Lord.

I am sure it is no unpleasant work that God calls us to on the Sabbath; who, but a wicked man, will count it a wearisome thing to think on Christ, and his dying love? to hear the sweet messages of free grace, and rejoice in the foresights and foretastes of his everlasting love? You know the black character of these, who of old called Sabbath-work a burden, and said, "When will the Sabbath be gone?" Amos viii. 5. This temper stands in opposition to gospel-holiness, therefore I think J. S. and every gospel minister, should be so far from indulging it by giving way to carnal recreations and diversions, that he should do what lies in his power to reprove, discourage and remedy it. And if ministers would be at pains to preach and pray with life and awakening seriousness, and afford their people a pleasant variety of wholesome discourses concerning Christ and eternity, it would be a far better way to cure their weariness, than to prescribe carnal recreations on the Lord's day; for this is a cure that both strengthens the disease, and is as bad as the disease.

Object. VIII. "But walking in the fields on the Lord's day seems to be a harmless practice: why will you not allow of that?"

Ans. Whenever the works of piety, necessity or mercy do require it, it is allowable: but to do it idly, for putting off the time, or for worldly employments or recreations, is what the word of God condemns. It is not only lawful, but dutiful to walk abroad, if it be for attending public ordinances, visiting the sick, or other Sabbath duties; for

then it is not for "finding our own pleasure," which is disallowed by Isa. lviii. 13. Exod. xvi. 29. And, by the same rule, I cannot condemn tender persons walking abroad, or taking the air, if their health require it; for the Lord loves mercy rather than sacrifice. Nor do I condemn a person's going to the fields this day, to have opportunity (like Isaac) in the evening, for secret meditation and prayer, when he wants conveniency for it within doors: for a walk thus improved, may be a walk to heaven, and is very consistent with walking with God. Only take these two cautions:

1st. If you walk abroad this day, choose to do it alone as much as possible; for people going in troops to the fields occasions idleness, vain talking, sporting, and misspending precious Sabbath-time. The society of vain persons helpeth to embolden one another in sin and folly, and maketh them more incapable of spiritual exercises, than when single and apart. Yea, I am persuaded, that these companies of people, who so commonly go a-walking together on the Lord's day, do not so much as pretend to be spiritually employed. Alas! they who know them best, can tell that they are most unfit for it on such occasions. Should any come and speak to them about death and eternity, Christ and their souls, or propose any serious question concerning the sermon they have been hearing, I fear he might expect to be mocked and laughed at by them for his pains.

2dly. Let your walking abroad, in any of the foresaid cases, be so ordered, that it may not give scandal, nor ensnare others. Study to do it so privately, that others may not be hardened or encouraged in their loose recreations on this day by your example: for even these things which are lawful, and otherwise necessary in themselves, are not to be done, when they may prove a scandal or temptation to others to sin; for, in such cases, we ought to deny ourselves of our lawful liberty.

Object. "We find two of Christ's disciples travelling to Emmaus and back again, on the Lord's day: and Christ met with them, and did not reprove them for it." Luke xxiv.

Ans. This was the first Lord's day of all, and was not then fully instituted, or, at least, made known to the disciples; for they were not then assured of Christ's resurrection. Again, walking abroad this day for promoting the

works of piety, for declaring God's glory, or preaching the gospel, is not unlawful. And such was this walking of our Saviour, and his two disciples, and their return to Jerusalem this day.

Now, having fully handled this point, of the negative sanctification of the Sabbath, or the holy rest requisite upon it; I proceed to treat of the *positive* sanctification of the day, and of the holy exercises required therein.

SECTION II.

Concerning the positive sanctification of the Sabbath, and the holy exercises requisite upon it.

THE rest of the Sabbath is not a lazy, idle rest; no, it is a holy, active sort of rest that is required upon it.—Though we cease from works of one kind, yet we must be diligent in works of another kind.

What I have to say on this head may be summed up in the following directions:

1. Concerning the disposition and frame of the soul, needful for sanctifying the Sabbath.

2. Concerning the holy duties requisite upon the Sabbath.

3. Concerning the special order, method and manner, wherein these duties are to be performed.

4. Concerning those particular sins, whereby the sanctification of the Sabbath is hindered, or the Sabbath profaned.

DIRECTION I.

Concerning the Frame of Spirit fit for sanctifying the Lord's day.

THE most suitable frame and disposition of soul, which I can recommend for sanctifying the Sabbath-day, is that of John the divine, Rev i. 10. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." It is a most comprehensive expression, and a noble pattern for our imitation; wherefore I shall in-

quire into the meaning and import of it. It is probable it may imply something extraordinary with respect to John; he might be in some singular spiritual extasy or transport, which ordinary Christians cannot attain to: nevertheless, the expression imports something attainable, and which ought to be endeavoured by all true Christians on the Lord's day.

To be in the Spirit may be taken either as respecting the Spirit of God, or our own spirits, or both: For certainly both the Spirit of God, and our own spirits, are necessary, and to be much employed, in the sanctification of the Lord's day. Wherefore, taking the expression as including both, I conceive, to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," imports these things:

1. A special dependence upon God's Spirit, for conduct and assistance, in order to the right performance of the duties of the Sabbath, and exercise of the graces therein: For without the Spirit's aid, we can neither pray, praise, hear, read, or do any thing aright.

2. The "serving of God with our spirits," as Rom. i. 9. or "worshipping him in spirit," John iv. 24. and performing the duties of the Sabbath with inward sincerity of heart. The Lord desires truth in the inward parts. He saith, "My son give me thy heart;" not, give me thy ear, thy tongue, thy lips, thy hands, or thy knees; for these may be given without the heart: but the heart can never be bestowed without these as its attendants. This is so necessary in all our duties and approaches to God, that God saith of it, as Joseph did of Benjamin, "Unless ye bring your hearts along with you, ye shall not see my face." You may observe Sabbaths, hear sermons, sing psalms, put up prayers, &c. but all will be to no purpose, Isa. i. 11. God would rather have the heart without the body, than the body without the heart. Soul-prayer, when it is alone, is accepted; but woe to bodily prayer, if it be alone.

3. A solemn retiring ourselves from the world, and abstracting our thoughts from earthly things, that we may be fitted for more immediate approaches to God, and intimate converse with him on his own day, wherein he uses to deal more familiarly with his people than at other times.

4. A laying ourselves open to the influences and operations of the Spirit of God, waiting for and thankfully enter-

taining his motions, convictions, reproofs and consolations, when they are allowed to us in the ordinances; and carefully guarding against every thing that may in the least grieve or offend the Holy Spirit.

5. A more than ordinary intenseness of heart and affections in the duties of God's worship. On Sabbath days, especially, we should be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" we should call in all our straying thoughts and affections, praying with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxvi. 11.—"Unite my heart to fear thy name;" and Psal. lxxx. 18. "Quicken us, and we shall call upon thy name." This day we should put forth our spiritual strength to the utmost, perform every duty, and exert every grace, with the greatest intenseness; we ought to love God with the most sublime affections, obey him with the purest intentions, pray to him with the most fervent importunity, and praise him with the most spiritual elevation of heart: nay, do it in some suitable proportion to the greatness of that God "with whom we have to do" in so solemn a manner on the Lord's day; for, Psal. cl. 2. we must not only "praise him for his mighty acts," but "praise him according to his excellent greatness;" we must worship him like himself.

6. A willing and cheerful performance of Sabbath duties: We ought to call the Sabbath "a delight, holy and honourable," and go this day with "joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation," and be "joyful in the house of prayer." Holy David was not satisfied this day with a bare approach to the altar, but he must "go to God as his exceeding joy." Psal. xliii. 4. And ought not believers under the gospel more especially to do this on the Lord's day, who have God in human nature to go to, and have the glorious achievements of condescending and redeeming love to commemorate this day?

The Lord requires us to perform the duties of this day with a frame of mind suitable to the spirit, freedom and liberty of the gospel, guarding against the servile frame of spirit which the Jews had in the observance of the duties of the law: for "we are not come unto the mount that burned with fire, and was terrible to behold; but unto mount Zion, the city of the living God." In the service of this day we ought to keep up impressions of God as most accessible, familiar to us, and dwelling in our own nature, and as one

that doth not so much regard our outward performances, as the inward frame and sincerity of our hearts. The Pharisees pretend to great strictness about the outward observance of the Sabbath: (and hence they presumed frequently to censure Christ and his disciples' practices on this day) but they were strangers to inward sincerity, and love to God. It is the willing mind and honest heart, in Sabbath performances, that God chiefly regards, not a pharisaical strictness.

7. Being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," implies, the having of the graces of the Spirit in a more lively exercise this day than ordinary: And therefore we ought this day solemnly to invite the "north and south winds of the Spirit to come and blow upon our gardens, that the spices thereof may flow out;" and that, particularly in all our approaches to God, we may be possest with a holy awe and reverence of God's majesty and greatness, and a deep sense of our own baseness and naughtiness, and have our faith acting vigorously upon God's goodness and mercy in and through Christ, our hearts melting with evangelical contrition and repentance, our love and spiritual desires flaming forth in all our acts of devotion; nay all our graces and affections should be this day elevated more than ordinary to God's special honour and glory.

8. A more than ordinary spiritual and heavenly frame of soul, suited to the work of this day. Since this day is wholly dedicated to God, and spiritual duties are the only work of it, our frame upon it should be more heavenly and divine than upon any other day, or when going about the duties of God's worship at any other time; we should this day be much viewing and admiring, with thankfulness, the dying "love of Christ," and the glorious "work of redemption," completed this day by his resurrection. We should be living this day above the world, and within view of heaven, making this day a little emblem and prelude of the everlasting rest of the saints above.

9. It imports that there is something of an universal sanctity and holiness peculiarly requisite upon this day. Now this sanctity must be universal, with respect to ourselves, with respect to the day, and with respect to the duties of it.

1. With respect to ourselves, all our thoughts, words and

actions this day, should be God's in a special manner; all that we are, all that we have, all that we can do, should be wholly devoted to God's worship and service on this day, Isa. lviii. 13. God would not only have our hands tied up from working, but also our tongues from talking, and our minds from thinking on worldly things this day.

2. With respect to the day, we should spend the whole of it in holy duties, either public, private, or secret. It is not for an hour or two only that we must study to be specially holy, but through the whole day; we should count every moment of Sabbath time precious, and suffer none of it to be lost that we can save, still aiming to be doing something for God and our own souls.

3. With respect to the duties of the day, we should esteem them all, and make conscience of them all, since they all have a divine stamp upon them; reading, hearing, prayer, praises, communicating, meditating, conferring, catechising, giving alms, &c. God is to be found in every one of these duties, and therefore none of them is to be neglected: and, when we find him not in one of them, we must seek him in another; and, if we conscientiously go the round of duties, we shall surely "find him whom our souls love." Cant. iii. 4.

Lastly. This expression of being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," imports the performing the duties of it with pure and spiritual ends, viz. "to glorify God, and enjoy him." God is the sole object of our worship, and he must be the principal end of it too. In our worship we must seek him, Heb. xi. 6. not ourselves. It is natural for man to worship God for self ends; we often perform duties, not only to be seen and esteemed of men, but also to be seen and valued by God for them, Isa. lviii. 3. "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?" &c. They did not perform duties to glorify God, but to obtain a reward for themselves, and have a righteousness of their own to be found and plead upon. Let us study to be denied to our own duties, and guard against a selfish and legal spirit in our Sabbath-days' performances. This will be a dead fly to spoil the ointment, and will keep our best duties from being savoury to God. Let us study then to perform them all "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," Rom. vii. 6. Let us use them all as

means for bringing God and our souls together, as means for obtaining communion and fellowship with God, and holding special intercourse with him, which is the only way to fit us for glorifying God both here and hereafter.

DIRECTION II.

Concerning the holy Duties requisite upon the Lord's Day.

THE duties necessary upon this day, are either public, private, or secret.

I shall not meddle with the duties of public persons as such on the Sabbath, or what is specially incumbent upon magistrates or ministers upon this day, in their public stations, but shall insist only upon those duties required of all Christians in common.

Quest. I. What are those public duties required of us upon the Lord's day ?

Ans. They are those which we are bound to perform in the public assemblies of God's people : and indeed the Sabbath is instituted chiefly for the solemn performance of the duties of God's worship, in the public meetings of his people : for the Lord hath a special delight therein ; "he loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob ; and wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he will be in the midst of them." Why ? It is in the assemblies of God's people for public worship, that God receiveth the highest praises from us ; and hence the Psalmist saith, "I will give thee thanks in the great congregation : I will praise thee among much people. And in his temple doth every one speak of his glory," Psal. xxxv. 18. Psal. xxix. 9. And as in public worship God receiveth the highest praises ; so there it is he bestoweth the richest mercies, Psal. lxv. 4. "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts : we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house," &c. O what good things are contained in that word, the "goodness of thy house !" There is pardon, peace, love, grace, life, light, strength, comfort, &c. Now, the public duties of the Sabbath, recorded in scripture,

which God's people ought to meet and assemble that day for, are various; and particularly, they are to meet together for reading and expounding the word of God; for preaching, hearing, praying, praising, partaking of the sacraments, collecting for the poor, &c. for all which we may see Lev. xxiii. 3. Psalm xcii. Isa. lxvi. 23. Luke iv. 16. Acts xiii. 14, 15. 27. 44. xv. 21. xvi. 13. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 12. But particularly,

I. Hearing the word publicly read and preached with reverence and attention, is a principal duty on the Sabbath; nay, our life depends upon it, Deut. xxxii. 46, 47. It is the great mean God hath appointed for the conversion of souls, Rom. x. 14 17. Whatever men think of it, it is the powerful instrument of our salvation, Rom. i. 16. The waters of the sanctuary run only through the channels of the word; the mines of grace are found only in those climates where the gospel-sun shines. The Lord, if he pleased, could immediately, by his Spirit, break open sinners' hearts; but he hath determined to honour his word in this work, as is plain in Lydia's case, Acts xvi. 9, 10. 14. Reading the word and sermons at home is good; but hearing the word preached is the ordinary mean God hath appointed and promised to bless for conversion: and if this be slighted, or prove ineffectual, no other way can be contrived for it, as we are told, Luke xvi. 29. 31. So that though a glorified saint or angel should come down from heaven, and preach upon the beauty of Christ, and glory of heaven, in the most lively and demonstrative manner; yet, if a preached gospel do not persuade sinners, neither would that. Or, though a damned soul should come up from hell, and preach the evil of sin, and torments of hell, in the most pathetic manner; yet neither would that persuade, if the word do it not. Why, the one is God's instituted mean, the other not. Let us then have an high esteem of God's ordinance, and embrace all occasions for attending it. "Be swift to hear," Jam. i. 19. Let none dare to count that mean, weak, or despicable, which the wise God hath instituted to save souls, 1 Cor. i. 21. "It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe" And how comes believing but by hearing? Reading good sermons (as one says) is like milk cold out of the dish, but preaching is like milk warm from the breast,

which is far more nourishing to the child. Let us always then, as "new-born babes, desire this milk, that we may both live and grow thereby," 1 Pet. ii. 2.

II. Another of the public duties of the Sabbath is public prayers with the congregation.

Prayer is a principal part of God's worship, and therefore is frequently put for the whole, Zech. viii. 21, 22. Acts xvi. 23. Hence God's temple of old was called the house of prayer. Public prayer is most necessary for averting judgments, obtaining blessings, and preserving love and unity among Christians; also, it is a solemn owning the God whom we serve in the face of the world, and so highly glorifies God. The bountiful Lord is well pleased to see many beggars thronging at the beautiful gate of his temple, waiting for an alms from his hand. And their joint prayers are most prevalent with him, far more than private prayers: for a petition presented by a single subject, is not so prevalent as that which is made by a whole city. Peter is cast into prison to be executed, Acts xii. but the church meets and prays him out of his enemies' hands. The united prayers of the church are most powerful to procure God's blessing and presence; therefore, reader, see that you make conscience in joining therewith, and be not absent from them. It is a most graceless practice in some, they either come not into the church till the public prayers be over, or they go out after sermon before public prayers be made. I am sure such can expect nothing by the sermon but a curse, since they join not with the prayers for a blessing upon it to themselves and others.

III. Duty is the singing of psalms, and praising God with the congregation. Praising God by singing, is often enjoined in scripture; yea, no less than four times in one verse, Psal. xlvii. 6. It is comely for the people of God; they are called singing birds, Cant. ii. 10. they are such as should sing all the months of the year; yea, even in the dead month of affliction: So did Paul and Silas in a prison at midnight, when their backs were sore with scourges, and their feet fast in the stocks, Acts xvi. 25. But in a special manner, singing praises to God is our duty in public assemblies, Psal. cxlix. 1. Luke xxiv. 53. And in these, "both princes and people, young men and maidens, old men and children," are bound to act a part in this

heavenly concert, Psal. cxlviii. 1, 12, 13. And above all days, the Sabbath is most proper for this duty, Psal. xcii. title, Psal. cxviii. 24. It is a day of thanksgiving and holy joy: We have God's praises to celebrate for the wonders of creation and redemption, we have the glorious victories of the Captain of our salvation to extol and magnify; and therefore the duty of singing praise this day is highly necessary. By this duty we not only glorify God, but we edify one another, Col. iii. 16. The melody and conjunction of many serious souls, tend to raise and elevate the heart. Yea, it was one mean of Augustine's conversion; he says, "He wept when he heard the psalms sung by the church."

Singing is a reading with meditation, and gives free vent to the thoughts and affections, and helps to excite and actuate the graces; it is the breath or flame of love or joy; it is the eternal work of heaven, the music of saints and angels there. Rev. v. 9, 10, 11. xv. 3. And what are church assemblies here, but the place of our apprenticeship and prepartion for heaven? I know nothing in the world that more resembles heaven, than a company of God's people harmoniously singing his praise "with grace in their hearts, making melody to the Lord;" for then the soul rejoiceth in divine goodness, meditates on divine promises, extols divine excellencies, and mounts up to God in acts of faith and love. Let us then make conscience of this heavenly duty in the public assemblies, and perform it with heart and tongue; for were it not a rare exercise, God would not honour it to be the only work of heaven, to the exclusion of prayer, repentance, reading, hearing, communicating, &c.

IV. Partaking of the sacraments is another public duty of the Sabbath.

1. The first day of the week, our Christian Sabbath, is the proper day for celebrating the memorial of redeeming love in the Lord's supper, Acts xx. 7. This was the ordinary practice of the primitive Christians in ancient times: and, because of their constant breaking of bread on this first day of the week, it wont to be called *dies panis*, August Epist. 118. So fired were the hearts of Christians in those early times with love to and zeal for their glorious Redeemer, who had so lately poured out his blood for their redemption, that when they assembled together upon the

first day of the week, the day he had instituted for his hon our, they could not think of parting, until, by the breaking of bread according to his example. they had celebrated the memorial of his dying love, his atoning blood, his victorious resurrection and triumphant return ; which also they designed as a pledge of their mutual love to and communion with one another. And though these first Christians were animated with more life and love, and were habitually in a better frame for partaking of this love feast, than, alas, we now are, yet we must own, that we are under the same obligations of love and gratitude to our dying Redeemer, and have the same need of the frequent application of his blood, and of a confirmed interest in his death, that they had ; and consequently ought to dedicate many more Lord's days to the celebration of this memorial feast of his supper, than now we do ; especially seeing the partaking of this ordinance is the proper work of the Lord's day, and one special design of the institution of this holy day.

2. Baptism is most proper on this day : The day is holy, and the sacrament is holy. Children should be brought to the congregation, and baptized in face thereof; for, since baptism is the door to Christ's house, it is fit to be entered when the family is convened or the church assembled, that so the receiving of new members thereunto may be homologate by them ; that the parents' engagements may have the more witnesses to them, and the children have more prayers put up for them ; and also, that the whole congregation may be edified by this solemn ordinance, and excited to remember and improve their own baptisms. Of which afterward.

As to the feasting part of this solemnly, I do not think it proper on the Lord's day : This may well be delayed till the day after.

V. Making public collections for the poor, is a proper duty on this day, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. This day being instituted to keep up the memorial of Christ's infinite charity to mankind. and for our meeting to receive new blessings and mercies from him, we are in gratitude, bound on this occasion to be liberal to his poor ; this doth not wrong, but promote our Sabbath-day's frame. Let no Christian then neglect his duty. which is so plainly commanded by Christ, and has been practised by the Christian church for near these two thousand years.

Think it not enough that you give something privately to the poor this day, and that this may excuse you from any public contribution: for this would be a slighting of an express command, and making one duty to justle out another; and besides, would tend to frustrate Christ's institution of deacons and church-rulers, who are appointed to receive and distribute the collections for the poor according to their various necessities. When the apostle enjoins the Corinthians to "lay by them in store on the first day of the week that there might be no gathering when he came;" it is plain, he chiefly means their depositing their charitable contributions with the church-rulers: for if it were not so, there would still be need of gatherings when he came.

I grant, indeed, it were very proper for every man, besides the public charity he gives on the Lord's day, likewise to set apart something this day, and lay it by him in store, according to his gains and incomes through the week, as a stock or fund, out of which he might give to pious and charitable uses, as occasion should require; and so, the stock being prepared beforehand, you will give the more bountifully and more willingly to such uses, than otherwise you will find in your hearts to do. If not only rich men, but even tradesmen, labourers and servants, would thus lay up every Lord's day some very small thing by them, they might, without any sensible damage to themselves, have somewhat to give to proper and needy objects: and I am persuaded this would not be the way to impair, but to increase your means.

Quest. 11. *What are the private duties required of us upon the Lord's day?*

Ans. It is not enough that we spend some part of the Lord's day in public worship; but since (as I proved before) the whole day is consecrated to God, the rest of it is also to be kept holy, and taken up in holy duties, in private and secret.

Domestic and private duties are necessary on this day, both for preparing us for the public ordinances, and for improving and reaping advantage by them.

These duties are family worship, by reading the word, singing the praises, and calling upon the name of God; family-catechising, repetition of sermons, christian conference, &c.

I. Family-worship is a duty incumbent on masters of families every day, but more especially upon the Lord's day. It is to be regretted that there should be any need to adduce arguments to prove this: But since there are some who call themselves ministers, who either deny it, or else have not so much conscience or courage directly to assert it in their preachings or writings, (they neither press the performance of this duty, nor reprove the neglect of it in others; and as it is generally said, they do not practice it themselves; whereby many are encouraged to slight family worship, and think it no necessary duty, to the great hindrance of the advancement of piety,) I shall therefore prove it to be the duty of all masters of families, especially on the Lord's day; and that, in the first place, from the fourth commandment.

The fourth commandment is principally directed to masters of families, because families, as such, are chiefly to be concerned in the keeping of it, both negatively and positively. For as the command enjoins every master of a family, with "all that are within his gates, his son, his daughter, his man servant," &c. to forbear all manner of work on the Sabbath; so it likewise enjoins them to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Now, to keep the "Sabbath holy to the Lord," without all doubt, implies the worshipping of God: This cannot be understood only of worshipping of God in the public assemblies, for these cannot be always had; yet still the command for sanctifying the Sabbath is binding on families. Again, the public worship takes up only a part of the Sabbath; but families are bound to sanctify the day throughout. This cannot be duly done by the members of the family worshipping God apart in secret; for families, as such, are bound to do it. The command binds a master to do it jointly with his family, as well as it binds a minister to do it jointly with his congregation. Moreover, if the command did only bind a master of a family to worship God in public, and in secret upon the Sabbath, then he would be no further concerned in sanctifying the Sabbath than any other member of his family; also, he would sanctify the Sabbath as much in communion with the members of other families as those of his own, which were most absurd. But it is plain, that the command lays it especially on the master of the family to take care of the sanctifying of the Sabbath in his family;

which must be by worshipping God, as well as by resting from labour; otherwise he would do no more than is required of the beasts: And this he can never account for, unless he do it in communion with his family, go before them in it, and, by his example, direct and encourage them in the holy worship and service of God upon his holy day. We have Joshua's practice sufficiently explaining this precept, Joshua xxiv. 15. He saith not "My house shall serve the Lord;" but "I and my house will do it;" *i. e.* We will jointly worship God, and sanctify his Sabbath, which are the principal parts of his service. This he would do, and we ought all to do, though there were no public worship in the world. And this is confirmed by Lev. xxiii 3. which requires the Sabbath to be religiously observed in all our dwellings or private houses, as well as in holy convocations; by every family apart, as well as by many families together.

But I shall demonstrate the indispensable necessity of this duty of family-worship, from several other topics.

I. The light of nature and sound reason pleads for it on many accounts. 1. It teacheth that all societies should jointly honour their founders. Now God is the Author and Founder of families, Psal. lxviii. 6, "God setteth the solitary in families;" and ought not families to worship him who instituted them, and that for this very end, that, "they might glorify him, and shew forth his praise?"

2. The light of nature teacheth masters of families to use all proper means for preventing the hurt of the family, and rescuing them from danger: and it is plain, that family prayer is a special mean for this effect. The light of nature taught the heathen mariner, with his ship's crew, Jonah i. 4. to use joint prayers to save them in a storm: and we see it was the master of the ship that called to this duty. Now, shall a heathen master of a ship do more in his society, by nature's light, than a Christian master of a family will do in his, who is privileged with the clear light of the gospel?

3. The light of nature teacheth men to do all they can to promote the good of their families, to provide food and physic for their servants and children's bodies. And doth it not teach them also to use means, to preserve their souls from wrath, and further their eternal well-being? And

what mean more proper for this end, than family worship and conjunct prayer? O masters of families, your examples, herein will have a happy influence upon your children and servants, both to excite them to prayer, and teach them how to pray.

4. Nature's light directed the heathens to have their Lares and Penates, or household gods, whom they worshipped in a special manner, and to whom they offered sacrifices for the protection and welfare of their families: hence we find in scripture, that Laban and Micah had their Teraphim or household gods. Now, though these were vain helpless gods, yet it shews they believed a necessity of family worship. Alas! heathens will rise up in judgement against many who are called Christians.

II. We are commanded in scripture to "pray every where, and with all manner of prayer," 1 Tim. ii. 8. Eph. vi. 18. Now if we must pray in all places, then surely in our families: if with "all manner of prayer," then surely with "family prayer."

III. Masters of families are bound to love God, "with all their heart, and their neighbours as themselves;" and consequently are bound to bring their families along with them to the worship of God. God's people are so filled with such love and zeal, that they frequently call the inanimate creatures to join with them in God's praise, Psal, lxix. 34. Psal. cxlviii. 2. &c. and how much more should they call their neighbours and fellow-christians? How oft doth David invite and exhort others to praise God with him? And will not masters of families, who love God and their neighbour, invite and exhort those to whom they are so nearly related, to join with them in the praise and worship of God?

IV. Families have many joint errands to the throne of grace, which call for joint family-prayers and praises: they often sin together, and therefore it is fit they confess and mourn together. They need many family blessings, and it is fit they jointly seek them; they are exposed to many family dangers, therefore they should jointly deprecate them: they receive many family-mercies, which call for family-thanksgivings. They work in their employments and labour together, and it is very fit they seek a blessing on them together.

V. All churches ought to worship God in a joint and solemn manner. Now, the Spirit of God frequently calls Christian families *churches;* which honourable title they would by no means deserve, if they had not communion together in the worship of God

VI. It is plain from 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5. 12. that as ministers are bound to rule the church, so masters of families are bound to rule their families; which is not only by instructing them, but going before them in God's worship, and being their guide and mouth in prayers and praises. For every head of a family is a prophet, priest, and king in his own house: he is a prophet, to teach and instruct his household; a priest to intercede and pray for them; and a king to protect and govern them; and especially to maintain God's worship and true religion among them.

VII. It is clear from 1 Pet. iii. 7. that husbands and wives are bound to pray together, and consequently the whole family; for there they are dehorted from strifes and contentions, because of their tendency to hinder their conjunct prayers.

VIII. The examples of the saints in scripture do invincibly prove family-worship to be our duty. We read not only of Abraham's instructing his household, and commanding them to worship God by themselves, but also, wheresoever he sojourns with his household, he "builds an altar," and with them "he calls on the name of the Lord" as is clear from Gen. xii. Gen. xiii. Gen. xxi. 33. I took notice of Joshua's family devotion a little before. David, Psalm ci. saith, "I will walk in my house at home, with a perfect heart;" and we find him coming home from the public worship, 2 Sam. vi. 20. to bless his own family, which was certainly to go about family worship with them, and pray for God's blessing on them. We find Daniel about this work three times a day, Dan. vi. 10. It was open family prayer which he performed; for, if it had been secret prayer, strangers would not have known so well of it, nor would they have found him at it, as it is said they did; so great a prince would have had servants in his outer rooms, to have stopt them ere they came so near as to hear him at his secret devotion. We have our great patron Jesus Christ singing psalms, and praying with his family, viz. his disciples, Matt. xxvi. 30. Luke ix. 18. John xvii. This was Corne-

lius's practice, Acts x. 2. It is said, "He feared God with all his house:" which implies, that he "worshipped God with all his house," for fearing of God comprehends worship.

Lastly. We find Paul, Philem. ii. 3. making mention of the church in Philemon's house, which was his religious praying family: and then, ver. 22. he speaks of their joint "prayers, through which he trusted he should be given to them."

Since then the duty is so clear, let us be concerned and zealous to promote the worship of God in our families. Consider how zealous some are to promote a false or superstitious worship; God bids the prophet look and wonder at their diligence, Jer. vii. 17, 18. There we see both fathers, children, husbands, wives, and all are taken up about it. Where, alas! is there any family so earnest for the true worship of God?

Objections against family-worship answered.

Object. 1. "We pray in secret, and that is sufficient."

Ans. 1. This is not sufficient, as hath been proven; one duty will not supply the want of another: family-prayer is your duty, as well as secret prayer; and you ought to go the round of duties, and slight no known duty, if you would prosper in any.

2. Secret prayer, O man, would be your duty, although you had no family; yea, although you had no tongue nor faculty of speech. O master of a family, why hath God blessed you with a family, and with the faculty of speaking, but that you might be more capable to glorify him with and before others? Hath not Christ, in that excellent pattern of prayer, taught you to pray conjunctly, by saying, "Our Father which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread?" Have you any charity to your neighbours, any love or pity to the souls of your family, and will you not take them along with you to the throne of grace? Did you enjoy any communion with God in secret, or taste any sweetness in the duty; would you not invite them to come, taste and see that God is good, and partake of the same heavenly cheer with you?

Object. 2. "We have not gifts to pray before others."

Ans. 1. The great hearer of prayer doth not look to gifts as we do; no, he looks to the heart. Say not then, because you cannot pray as a minister, or such a gifted man, that you will not pray at all: bring a humble and broken heart to God, and he will accept of you, though you had but two or three words, or broken sentences. It is not fine words, or eloquent expressions, that God is delighted with; it is the sincerity of the heart.

2. Use the one talent, trade with it, and it will increase: do as you can, and God will teach you to do better. I never knew any that tried it sincerely, but God helped them. Can ye not say with the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray?" Yea, say but the Lord's prayer, if you can say no more, and, if you do it sincerely, more shall be given.

3. Make use of the helps which God affords you for prayer. 1. Acquaint yourselves with the scriptures, frequently read the Psalms, and particularly the xxv. li. lxxxvi. cxix. psalms, and others, where you will find variety of fit expressions and petitions to be used in prayer. Take with you these words which the Holy Ghost teacheth; they are the most acceptable words. Likewise study the Ten Commands, view the large extent and meaning of them, the duties required, and sins forbidden in each of them, and they will furnish you with vast matter for confession and petition. Also study the Lord's prayer, and the import of the several petitions thereof; for there are many petitions wrapt up in every one of them.

2. Study well the attributes and works of God, and they will afford manifold matter, both for prayer and praises. View the work of creation; and more especially, the work of redemption, the eternal contrivance of it, the glorious Mediator, his nature, his offices, life, death, sufferings, and infinite love; his fulness, graces, offers, promises, and well-ordered covenant, and then, I am sure, you will not be barren of suitable matter, and words for prayer. "A very child (as one saith) when he sees a merchant's pack opened, where there are variety of things which he desireth, will learn, without book, to say, O father, buy this, or give me that." So the soul will not want what to say, that sees the treasures and riches of Christ opened.

3. Study to be acquainted with yourselves, your hearts, and lives: consider your state and circumstances both in

soul and body, and the providences of God towards you. Think upon the vanity and inconstancy of all worldly things, the frailty of man, and brevity of life; and particularly, think much on the four last things, death, judgment, heaven and hell, and you will have abundance of matter for prayer.

Besides all which, there are four words you should always keep in mind when you go to prayer, which would prove a lasting fountain for suitable matter to you, viz. your sins, miseries, wants, and mercies.

1. Your sins. Have you not a great multitude to confess, and seek mercy for, sins original and actual, of omission and commission, of heart and life? What indwelling corruptions, and heart-plagues have ye to lament, hardness, deadness, carnality, unbelief, backsliding, hypocrisy, &c. Look into your lives, and behold what sins ye have committed, and what duties ye have omitted, and make particular confession of them.

2. Your miseries. How many have ye to complain of, and beg deliverance from in prayer? Are you not born in a lost state, a child of wrath, an heir of hell, under an insupportable burden of unpardoned guilt, most loathsome and polluted in God's sight; under the tyranny of Satan, liable to all the miseries of this life, cares, toils, losses, crosses, sickness, and death; yea, exposed to the wrath of God, the curses of the law, the sword of justice, to a strict and severe judgment-seat, to unquenchable fire, and everlasting burnings, and to banishment from God's favour and presence to all eternity?

3. Your wants. Are ye not poor beggarly sinners, full of wants and necessities? "In us dwells no good thing." Do you want the bread of life, the balm of Gilead, pardon of sin, peace with God, deliverance from wrath, a new nature, a soft heart? Do you want "eye salve, white raiment, gold tried in the fire?" Do ye want faith, love, repentance, victory over lust? &c. And have ye not matter for prayer and supplication? Have ye not temporal wants to lay before God? Ye can tell them to your friends, and complain to them, though they afford you little help: ought ye not far rather go to God with them, who is both able and willing to help? Do you want health to your bodies, bread to your familes, provision for your children, a blessing on your labours? Then seek them from God: "The ravens

cry to him, and he hears them," how much more will he hear you?

4. Your mercies. God daily loads you with his mercies; they are new to you every morning: It is of the Lord's mercies that your houses are not consumed with fire in the night, and ye buried in the ruins thereof; that sudden death doth not smite your children, servants, cattle, or relations; that you waken in safety every morning and not in everlasting flames. Doth not the Lord set a hedge about you and all that you have, and preserve you from devils, enemies, and manifold dangers? give you health and strength, bless the work of your hands, cover a table for you, and rain manna about your tents? And have you not plenty of matter for thanksgiving? Yea, he hath contrived a way to save you, sent his Son to redeem you, makes pressing offers of his salvation, and waits patiently for your repentance. Now, if you think on these mercies, can you want words in prayer to bless God for them? I say then, remember your sins, miseries, wants, and mercies, and ye will never be scarce of matter for prayer.

Object. III. "We have not confidence to pray before others."

Ans. 1. Mind what Christ saith, "They that are ashamed of him before men, he will be ashamed of them before his Father in heaven."

2. Many are ashamed to pray before others, who are not ashamed to sin, curse, swear, drink, and break the Sabbath before others.

3. Why should you be ashamed to pray before your own family, these you constantly converse with, and of whom you have the command? Will you have confidence to plead this frivolous excuse at the day of judgment?

But, *lastly*, You will not plead such excuses in things relating to the body. If your children and family were starving for want of bread, ye would neither want words nor confidence to make known your case to a rich friend; if you were mortally sick or wounded, you would freely tell your case to a physician; if ye were drowning, ye would call aloud for help: and now, when ye and your families are ready to perish in your sins, will ye not make known

your case to God, and cry with the disciples, "Lord, save us, or else we perish." The common beggars, that go from door to door, will rise against you; they think no shame to cry at the rich man's door, hear them who will; they want not words enough, ye need not teach them what to say; their pinched bowels make them both eloquent and importunate; they weary not to stand and cry, though they be but expecting a small morsel. And shall we, whose needs are far greater, whose expectations are far higher, want words or confidence to cry and knock at God's door, since he declares that our importunity is nowise a trouble but a pleasure to him? Are not everlasting life, and deliverance from hell, worth the seeking? Shall men do more for the welfare of their dying bodies, than we for the salvation of our immortal souls?

Object. IV. "We have not time to spare for family worship, our labour is so great, and business so throng."

Ans. 1. Is not the worship and service of God the greatest business you have to do in the world? All other things are trifles in respect of this.

2. Better want time for sleeping, for eating, or any thing, than want time for this, which is far more necessary than any thing else.

3. God, in his providence, may soon cast greater hinderances in the way of your worldly business than this, as ye suppose, would be: he may send fevers among children and servants, that will stop your labour much longer than a little time spent daily in family worship would do. When sickness or death comes, they will not be put off by telling that you have no time from your labour to be sick; no, ye must find time to be sick, and lie on beds, though it were in the throng of harvest. And must ye, whether ye will or no, find time to be sick and die; and will you find no time to pray with your families, in order to prepare you and them for sickness and death? And further, it is likely, that if ye prayed more in your families, your labour would be less stopt by sickness and other troubles; you should have fewer crosses and perplexities in your business; and, whatever they were, you might expect they would be sanctified. Family-prayer would be a sweet vent and ease to the mind, under all family cares and anxieties.

4. Family-prayer will not hinder your business, though

in the throng of harvest. What stop would it be to your work, to be every morning and evening a quarter of an hour upon your knees with your family? Nay, it would further it, and procure a blessing on the work of your hands. And I have observed, that in those parts of the nation where husbandmen and tradesmen take time for family worship, they are in a more flourishing condition in worldly things, than in those parts where it is neglected. Remember, that all the success of your labour depends on the special blessing and providence of God, and there is no way more likely to obtain this than family-prayer. If God vouchsafe not his blessing, your labour will be labour in vain, Psal. cxxvii. 1, 2. How soon may God blast all the labours of prayerless persons?

5. Whatever you pretend from want of time on week days, to excuse you from family-worship; yet there is no shadow for this objection upon the Sabbath-day, in which you have no other business but to serve and worship God. He is graciously pleased to free you this day from your labour, that ye may apply yourselves entirely to his worship without distraction. O ye that are straitened for time through the week for family and secret prayer, be busy on the Lord's day in the performance thereof, and be thankful to God for allowing you this day for these exercises.

In the name, then of the great God, who hath founded families, and who is the God of all the families of Israel; and in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, in whom only the families of the earth can be blessed: I beseech and obtest all you that are masters of families, to honour the Creator and Redeemer of the world in your families; erect him a family-altar, and dedicate your houses to be temples for the worship of God. Perform this duty conscientiously every day, but more especially upon the Lord's day; let your family sacrifices this day be doubled. I shall add some more motives to it.

I. This is the way to procure you all sorts of family blessings. Would you have God to build your houses, bless your substance, dwell in your families, and be a guard to them night and day? Would ye have your relations comfortable, your affairs successful, and your enjoyments sweet? Then set up, and keep up family worship, make your houses little churches.

1. You may expect family-protection. If you, by family prayer, lodge your families "under the shadow of the Almighty, you need not be "afraid of terrors that fly by night or by day:" for you are under the protection of him "that keeps Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps." Praying families are preserved from many more evils and mischiefs than they are aware of: sometimes divine providence makes a visible distinction between them and others. I have read of a little town in the canton of Bern in Switzerland, consisting of 90 houses, that, in the year 1584, was all destroyed by an earthquake, except the half of one house, where the master of it, with his family, were at the time on their knees at family-prayer. This is a noble pillar for supporting your houses.

2. You may expect family-provision: "Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure, you shall dwell in the land, and verily have food." God feeds the ravens that cry to him, and will he not much more feed Christian families that cry, "Lord, give us this day our daily bread?" O poor tradesmen, who can hardly get your credit kept and families maintained; O poor tenants, who can scarcely get your farms paid, and children provided for, by all your sore toil and labour; will you try family-prayer sincerely? I dare say, that the Lord, who "blessed the house of Obededom, and all that pertained to him, because of the ark of God which he lodged," will from that day forth bless you, prosper the work of your hands, and make your affairs more successful: it will not hinder your labours, but procure a blessing on them. I say then, make a fair trial, and I hope in a little time you shall find a sensible change in your affairs. Some have observed this in their experience.

3. You will have the more comfort and satisfaction in your family-relations: this is the way to keep up your authority among them, and to procure you more respect from them. If a master of a family exert his authority to bring those under his charge to attend family-worship, he will find them more observant of his other commands; children would be more obedient, and servants more faithful; the fear of that God, whom they daily worship with you, would be an awe-band upon them, to do their duty to you, and act for your interest.

II. Family-worship is an excellent mean to advance religion and reformation through the whole land. If every one would begin with his own family, reform it and plant piety therein, what happy cities and parishes would we soon have? If you would recover decaying piety in the land, and banish cursing, swearing, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, &c. out of the town and parish where you live, then begin with your own family; set up prayer and religion therein. Satan and vice will not dwell contentedly beside prayer. The way to make a clean street is, for every house to sweep before its own door. Religious families are excellent nurseries to the church, and seminaries of piety. Do you wish then to see religion flourish, and reformation carried on? and do you desire to be instrumental therein? then worship God, promote piety in your own family. Your example might influence your neighbours about you to the like; it would excite your children and servants to secret prayer; and, when they come to get families of their own, they will readily do as you do, and so will their children and servants after them: and thus you will be instruments of handing down religion to the rising generation, and for "turning many unto righteousness." O if God would persuade the hearts of people, both in town and country, to set about family-worship, how soon would religion put on another face? The streets and fields would not be so thronged with old and young on the Sabbath, people walking and discoursing idly, and boys playing and sporting themselves; the church would be better frequented, and people more attentive and devout in time of sermon and public-worship. Family-worship also, is a notable help to prepare us for public-worship, and the right observation of the Sabbath.

But the domestic sanctification of the Sabbath, enjoined by the fourth command, includes more duties than prayer, reading the word, and singing of psalms in families; And so I come to speak of others.

A second domestic duty on the Sabbath, is family-catechising and instruction.

Masters of families are bound to instruct and teach those under their charge, viz. their children and servants, in all things necessary to salvation. Yea, they are bound, not on-

ly to instruct them in the knowledge of the principles, but also to enjoin them the performance of the duties of the Christian religion, and to admonish and reprove them for the neglect thereof. The necessity of this duty may be proven by many arguments.

1. From the law of nature that binds us to do what we can to promote the welfare and happiness of our children and families, and to help them, when in misery and distress. Children are a part of the parents, wrapt up in another skin; and therefore parents should do for them as for themselves. 'Tis not enough that ye provide for their bodies; for the very birds and beasts do this, nay, even "the sea-monsters draw out the breast and give suck to their young ones," Lam. iv. 3. but you ought to provide for their souls, which are their better part, yea, a thousand times more precious than their bodies. You would think it barbarous cruelty in a parent, to suffer his child or servant to starve for want of bodily food; O but it is far more cruel, to suffer their precious souls to perish and starve for want of spiritual food, or necessary instructions.

2. From the clear light of God's word, that binds this on masters of families as a duty, we see the fourth command obligeth masters to be answerable for their children and servants, touching the sanctification of the Sabbath, and the service of God on that day; which certainly imports their instructing them in their duty. The Lord commits their souls to their care, and they must account for them to him. When God gives any of you a child, he charges you, as Pharaoh's daughter did Moses's mother, Exod. ii. 9. "Take this child, and nurse it for me; and I will give thee thy wages:" Or, as the prophet said to the king, 1 Kings xx. 39. "Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, thy life shall go for his life." If this child or this servant perish in his sins or ignorance, through your neglect, his blood will I require at your hands. Nay, we have express scripture precepts binding you to this duty: read Deut. vi. 6, 7. Prov. xxii. 6. Eph. vi. 4. Also, we have the examples of the saints, who were careful in performing this duty. God takes special notice of it in Abraham, to his everlasting commendation, Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord," &c.

It was David's practice, Psal. xxxiv. 11. Prov. iv. 3. 4. and also Hezekiah's, Isa. xxxviii. 19.

3. You are concerned, in common justice, to instruct your children, that ye may, so far as lieth in you, repair the injury done them, by your conveying original corruption to them. Has God provided a cure for them in the gospel, and will ye not do so much as shew it to them? If you had rashly given a wound to any of their bodies, would ye not in haste provide a cure, or send for a physician? and will ye not do nothing for their souls, that are dying of the wounds of sin given them by you?

4. It doth highly contribute to advance Christ's kingdom in the world, to train up a seed for his service. This is likely to prove a more successful mean of reformation, than any other that can be used, either by magistrates or ministers, laws or sermons. Therefore, as Pharaoh sought to destroy the Israelites by killing their young ones; So Satan, who is filled with spite against the kingdom of Christ, knows there are no such compendious way to ruin it, as by perverting youth, and suppressing family religion; this is a blow at the root, which causes him to employ all his power and policy this way.

5. It is also very much for your own interest and comfort, to instruct your families in the knowledge of Christ, and ways of religion. Ye may expect, that your children and servants will prove dutiful to you. Well educated children will take care of their parents in time of old age, sickness, or poverty. Whereas those, that are not so, often neglect their parents in the foresaid cases, or wish them dead. If you conscientiously instruct your children and servants, God will reward you for it, even in this life. Abraham, as we heard, made conscience of it; and God blessed him with a dutiful son Isaac, and a faithful servant Eliezer of Damascus. What an unparalleled instance have we of Isaac's profound obedience to his father's commands, in submitting patiently to bear the wood, yea, to be bound, and laid upon the altar to be sacrificed? And, what a wise and faithful servant was the steward of his house, Eliezer, whom he trusted with all he had, and with the great concern of his son's marriage, which he managed with great prudence and integrity, and prayed earnestly for the good success of it! So that, if ye sow the seeds of piety in

children and servants, yourselves shall reap the fruit thereof, even in this world.

Again, it will be very comfortable to you on a death-bed, to leave a religious praying family behind you. What though you leave your wife and children poor? yet if you leave them praying, God will provide for them while here, and ye shall shortly have a joyful meeting with them in heaven. Your children here will "rise up and call you blessed they will praise you, and follow your pious example: And as you took care to hand down religion to them, so will they do to their children and servants, when they come to get families; and, when you are blessing God in heaven, they will be blessing God for you on earth: nay, they will meet you at a judgment seat with blessings in their mouths. Your children will bless God that ever they had such parents: your servants will bless him that ever they had such masters, that ever they saw your faces, or came under your roof. It has been known, that many, at a dying hour, have blessed God for determining their lot to fall into such and such religious families, where first they became acquainted with Christ and religion.

A third domestic Duty on the Lord's Day, is Godly conference.

According to Isa. lviii. 13. we ought not this day to speak our own words; and consequently we ought to speak religious words, and entertain spiritual discourse. when we are together, concerning Christ and heaven; or about the sermons we have heard, telling one another what we remember thereof, and that which did mostly edify us.

Godly conference is well pleasing to God; he notices and records all the good words his people do speak, Mal. iii. 16. When the two disciples going to Emmaus, were about this exercise on the Lord's day, Christ is so well pleased, that he comes to them and makes the third man; he entertains them with heavenly discourse, and opens their understandings to know the scriptures. We see, when Elijah is so employed with Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 11. he is taken up and transported gloriously into heaven. This is a heavenly exercise, and the employment of the glorified in heaven. It was Christ's work, when he was transfigur-

ed on mount Tabor, and met with Moses and Elias: he conferred with them upon the blessed subject of his death and sufferings. O how holy and fruitful was Christ always in his discourse? "His lips dropt as the honey comb, and his tongue was as choice silver." He spiritualized earthly things, and turned them into heavenly instructions: when he conferred with the woman at the well of Samaria, concerning the water of that well, John iv. he quickly drew her from ordinary water to the water of life. And, when eating bread in the Pharisee's house on the Sabbath-day, Luke xiv. he discoursed of eating bread in God's kingdom: so let all the disciples of Christ on this day imitate his example. See that your speech be seasoned with grace. and your lips like those of the righteous, that feed many. Speak much this day to the commendation of Christ, and invite others to acquaintance with him; and, when you see it for edification, communicate the experiences you have had of his love; "Come here, all ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my soul," Psal. lxvi. and thus one live coal will help to kindle another.

Upon this day of holy rest, Christians should be oft thinking and speaking of the everlasting rest above, and conferring together of the way to it, and their meeting there. Do you believe you are going to that rest, and yet never speak of it? If two or three of you had entered into an agreement to go to America, and seek the golden mines which are there, would ye never be speaking of that country, or desirous to hear of it before your going? O Christians! are ye shortly to be "caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so to be for ever with the Lord?" and will you not comfort one another with these words? according to 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. It hath likewise been the practice in many places, when religion comes to be in esteem, for young persons to meet together in the evening of the Lord's days for godly conference upon spiritual subjects, or the sermons they have heard, and for prayer and praises to their mutual edification. And it is always observed, that such religious meetings on Sabbaths or week days are set up in parishes where the gospel begins to thrive, just as naturally as birds draw together in the spring; young converts are Christ's 'singing birds,' Cant. ii. 12. And the Scripture affords good

ground and warrant for such meetings, Mal. iii. 16. Psal. lxvi. 16. Psal. cxix. 63. Jer. xxiii. 35. Acts xi. 5. 12. Heb. iii. 13. Heb. x. 24, 25. 1 Pet. 4. 10.

A fourth domestic Duty on the Sabbath, is a holy care in masters of families to restrain all profanation of the day by children and servants, or any within their gates.

The fourth command expressly requires this. Though you be not magistrates, yet God has clothed you, who are heads of families, with power and authority in your families, to see to the honour of this day: use it then for God, as ye will be answerable. Let none under your charge profane this holy day, by working, sporting, or playing; or by idleness or neglect of the duties of the day. See that they duly attend public ordinances and family worship; suffer them not to absent therefrom.

O masters of families, concur frankly with the minister of the parish, to suppress the abuses of this day; you will see them, and know of them, when ministers cannot. Testify against them in your stations, and this will make the minister's work the more easy. O what a sad thing is it in many places, to see ministers left to fight against sin alone, without having one to join with them, or once open a mouth against it! Hence it is, that many are turned impudent in sinning, particularly in Sabbath-breaking, and value not a minister's rebuke. Alas! have ye neither love to God nor your neighbours' souls? Have ye no concern for God's glory, nor grief to see him dishonoured? Have you no charity to your near relations, no love to your own children, no concern for your servants or nearest neighbours, no desire to keep them from falling into everlasting burnings; that you will not speak one word to prevent it, or warn them of their hazard?

Let none say, with cursed Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" For God requires you to be doing good to all in your station, and to love your neigbour as yourself. And the fourth command expressly makes you accountable for all within your gates.

Object. "I have stubborn servants, that will not be restrained by my admonitions or reproofs."

Ans. 1. You should be more careful in the choice of the members of your family, and particularly of your servants, since God gives you a free choice in this matter. Consider David's care therein. Psal. ci. 6, 7. "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight." Do ye think that he or she is fit for your service, that cares not for God's service? Can you expect a blessing on the work of their hands, who are enemies to God? A godly servant (though I confess he is rare enough to be found) is a greater blessing than many think; he not only works for his master with his hands, but with his prayers also, as did godly Eliezer, Gen. xxiv. 12. and to be sure he did his master Abraham as good service by his prayers as by his prudence.

But, 2. If it be your lot to be concerned with stubborn and disobedient servants, let them know that you have authority from God, to oblige them to keep the Sabbath, by attending ordinances in public and private, and to restrain them from profaning this day; and, if they will not be reclaimed, to expel them from your house. If they neglect or mismanage your work, would ye not use your power and authority with them, to cause them to help their faults? And, were you in as good earnest for God's service on the Sabbath, as for your own upon week days, I am persuaded ye might bring your children and servants to serve God, and keep this day far better than they do.

Quest. III. *What are the secret duties requisite upon the Lord's day?*

Ans. It is not enough that we worship God this day in conjunction with others, whether in the congregation, or in families: the right sanctification of the Sabbath includes secret duties also, such as prayer, reading, meditation, &c. That religion is not true, which is all visible to the world; for the life of religion lies in the secret intercourses which are betwixt God and the soul, that the eyes of men do not penetrate into. Secret duties are the best trial of our sincerity; the Lord, that seeth in secret, takes special notice of them, and if duly performed, he will openly reward them. Let us therefore make conscience of them, and that especially upon God's holy day, which is entirely set apart for

holy duties: and labour to time duties so this day, as one duty may not justle out another. As you must not let family duties interfere with public duties; so you must take care that secret duties do not interfere with family ones. But, more particularly,

1. Secret prayer is a duty necessary on the Lord's day, both for preparing us to attend the public ordinances, and for improving and reaping benefit by them afterwards. I do not mean that this duty is to be confined to the Sabbath only: no it is necessary every day, according to David's example, Psalm lv. 17. but that it is especially requisite as a part of the worship of this day. Prayer is so necessary, that it is put for the whole worship of God, Acts ii. 21. It is the character of a converted soul, "Behold he prays," Acts ix. 11. but it is the mark of an atheist, that he "calls not upon God," Psalm xiv. And, in a special manner, secret prayer is what every carnal man hath an aversion to. The devil can allow men their church prayers, their family prayers; but, for closet prayers he cannot away with, especially when they are frequent and constant, because they are too much an argument of sincerity. A hypocrite takes no delight in secret prayer, nor in any duty but what is seen of men, and will gain him a name. But, reader, if thou art sincere, thou wilt consider that God's eye is upon thee in private, as well as in public; and therefore wilt seek to approve thyself to God in secret duties, as well as public. As secret prayer was our Saviour's constant practice, while on earth, so it was his special injunction to all his followers, Matt. vi. 6. You need not fear that your secret prayers will be forgotten. No: God is every where; he has an ear to hear your secret groans, and an eye to see your secret tears: yea, he has a bottle to preserve them, so as a drop of them shall not be lost.

In our secret addresses, which are more stated and solemn, let us carefully remember the three parts of prayer, confession, petition, and thanksgiving. Let us confess the sins we are guilty of, cry for the mercies we want, and thank God for those we enjoy Let us mind that this is not only a commanded duty, but our dignity and privilege. What an honour is it for dust and ashes to be allowed access to the great God! for a worm to speak freely to its Creator! for a poor beggar to converse familiarly with the King of

Heaven! O sinner, would not all thy neighbours envy thee, if thou wert so honoured by an earthly king? Be exhorted then to value and make use of this liberty.

2. Consider at what a dear rate Christ hath bought this freedom for us. How much did it cost him to erect a throne of grace, to which we may repair with confidence? And, will not we make use of this privilege with thanksgiving?

3. Consider the profit of it: It is like the "merchantship, Prov. xxxi. 14. that brings our food from afar." By it we trade with heaven, and bring down Christ's unsearchable riches: it is a key to open the treasure of God's mercies to us in the morning, and to lock us up under God's protection at night. By it we prevail with God, screen ourselves from wrath, and put Satan to flight. In a word, prayer is a key to heaven, a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to the devil.

4. It is the way to make up and preserve acquaintance with God, which will be of great use to you in the time of trouble, or at the hour of death. It is no small encouragement to you to address one for help, with whom you have had long acquaintance and familiarity, and of whose kindness you have had frequent experience. But, prayerless man, it will be a most melancholy case, when you are going out of the world, to be put to cry to that God you have been an utter stranger to all your life; or to be forced to appear before that God you never loved, or desired to converse with; or to be fain to challenge acquaintance with him, who will utterly disclaim you, and say, "depart from me. I never knew you." But, O praying soul! that hast acquaintance with God, death will have another view to thee; thou mayest look on it, as Jacob did on the waggons, sent to carry him to his son Joseph, and say, "Now I am going to God, whom I know; I am going to meet with that Friend, with whom I have had a long acquaintance, to whom I have paid many a visit, and with whom I have had sweet secret converse, and whom I have longed to see, and who will embrace me in his arms, and welcome me to glory."

5. Consider what a mercy it is, O man, that God is yet calling thee to prayer, and continuing thee in the land of prayer, when so many thousands, as deserving, are beyond prayer, and lost for ever. O then pray now, while thou

hast time to pray, health to pray, helps to pray, and encouragement to pray. Read the gracious promises of life and salvation to you, if you do it, Psalm lxix. 32. Rom. x. 13. Make this world a time for prayer, and the next shall be a season for praise. Dost thou think to be saved without prayer? Dost thou expect to have thy life without begging it at God's hands? O what oil will it add to thy flames in hell, when conscience will tell thee, If thou hadst prayed, thou hadst not been there? Well then, now thou hast a season for prayer; but, remember, it will not always last: If thou improve it not, expect that God will turn a deaf ear to you in the day of your calamity, at a death-bed, or a tribunal. Read and tremble at that word, Prov. i. 26, 27, 28. God says, "he will not hear you when you cry." And if he refuse to hear you, then, who will hear you? Angels will not, saints will not, nearest relations will not, hills and mountains will not: And, what a wretched, forlorn, and forsaken creature wilt thou be? There will be none to own thee then, if thou acquaint not thyself with God by prayer now. See the answer the foolish virgins got, when they came after the door was shut, Matt. xxv. See what an answer the rich man got, when he begged for "a drop of cold water to cool his tongue," Luke xiv. "Seek God, then, while he may be found; call on him while he is near:" Otherwise your late untimely cries will not be regarded.

Object. "O, say some, we have not the gift of prayer, we cannot pray."

Ans. I have said enough in answer to this a little before. I shall only add one word: Art thou a Christian, O man, and canst not pray? Thou mayest as well say, thou art a scholar, but canst not read; a soldier, but canst not fight. Prayer is as essential to a true Christian, as breath is to the body: Why? Prayer is the very breathing of the soul to God. So it is called, Lam. iii. 56. O man, have you nothing to say in prayer; then go to God, and tell him so; bend down on your knees, and say, "Here is a poor ignorant creature, that cannot pray; Lord, teach me to pray." The publican made a very short prayer, Luke xviii. "God be merciful to me a sinner;" yet it was accepted, since it came from a humble heart. O! if your heart be broken, your words will be accepted, although they be broken and few. The silliest beggar will find something to say at your

door, though he expect but a crumb; and can you find nothing to say at God's door, when you have a soul to save, a hell to shun, and Jesus Christ and a kingdom in your view?

But, besides that sort of secret prayer which is more stated and solemn, there is prayer that is more sudden and ejaculatory, when we lift up our hearts to God with some short petitions, on any occasion or emergency. Ejaculatory prayers are useful on every day, but you should have them more frequent on the Sabbath-day: For, since on this day you must "not think your own thoughts, or find your own pleasures," heavenly breathings and pious ejaculations should issue forth continually; by seeking pardon for such a sin, strength against such a lust, victory over such a temptation, and grace to spend Sabbath time suitably. Are you going to the church or returning from it? Are you reading, hearing, communicating, praising, or about any other duty? be frequently making use of this kind of prayer, particularly begin and end every duty with it; look up before for assistance, and look up after it for acceptance, and that infirmities in it, for Christ's sake, may be pardoned. These prayers, of all others, are the freest of distraction, they being put up and over before ever Satan be awakened to tempt us. As for other prayers, our preparations to them, though only by the alteration of our posture, give notice to Satan what we are about to do; but ejaculatory prayers are so quickly darted up to God, that they will be in heaven before Satan can shoot any of his darts against us. They are used to keep up communion with God in the intervals of other duties, and for keeping the heart in the fear of God all the day long. As the priests under the law were not only to "offer up the morning and evening sacrifice duly," but "to keep the fire burning on the altar all the day;" so we must not satisfy ourselves with solemn and stated duties only, but should study to keep in the fire always by holy thoughts and ejaculations. Christ saith of the spouse, that "her lips drop as an honey-comb," which is either still dropping, or in a continual forwardness to drop. Some of God's people have more devotion this way in their shops, than others have in their closets; and while walking in the streets, or working in the fields, than others have when praying on their knees. They have stricter communion with God this way at their common tables, than others have at a communion table.

A second secret Duty on the Lord's Day is reading of the Scriptures and other good books.

This is a duty necessary every day, but especially on the Lord's day: It is the character of the blessed man, that "his delight is in the law of the Lord, and he meditates therein both day and night," Psalm i. This should be particularly verified of us on the Sabbath. Read the word, that you may be taught what to believe of God, what duties you owe to God, and what sins you are guilty of against him. Who can set forth the excellency and usefulness of it? It is a glass to discover our spots, a lamp to guide us in the dark, a fire to warm our cold affections, a magazine to supply us with armour against our spiritual enemies. It is a physic garden, wherein grow all sorts of medicinal herbs for our spiritual maladies: The promises are as fragrant flowers and spices in this garden; believers take many a pleasant walk among these beds of spices. It is an apothecary's shop, out of which we may have eye-salve for our blindness, sovereign cordials in all our soul distresses. David found this to his sweet experience, Psalm cxix. 50.—"This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me." Here are suitable cordials for all our various cases, be it desertion, temptation, poverty, sickness, reproach, persecution, &c. Here are the waters of the sanctuary for cleansing us from our pollutions. Here is the heavenly rain, for making soft and tender our hard hearts. The scriptures are both food and physic to our souls; here is meat for strong men and milk for babes. "The two Testaments (as Augustine saith) are the two breasts which we must suck for spiritual nourishment." And there is none of God's children that will call them dry breasts or empty cisterns; they have often afforded them strength, nourishment, light, life, and comfort. O how highly have God's people in all ages prized God's holy word, and the liberty of reading it! It hath been "sweet as honey to their taste." I have read of one, who being a prisoner in a dark dungeon, when light was allowed him for a short time to take his meat, he would take his Bible, and read a portion of it, saying, "He could eat without light, but he could not read without it." I am persuaded there is no better way in this world for improving the faculty of sight, and benefit of light, than by reading the word of God. So far as time can

allow you upon the Sabbath, I judge it very profitable to read other good books also, such as our Confession of Faith, Vincent's Catechism, Vincent on the Last Judgment, Guthrie's Trial of a saving interest in Christ, Allein's Alarm, Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, Pearse's Preparation for Death, Fox's Time and the end of Time, Doolittle's Call to delaying Sinners, Baxter's Saint's everlasting Rest, his Poor Man's Family-book, Gray's Sermons, Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity, his Saint indeed, Mead's almost Christian, the Treatises of Doolittle, Campbell and Henry upon the Sacrament, Rutherfoord's Letters, the fulfilling of the Scriptures, Clark's Martyrology, Beard's Theatre of God's Judgments. These, and such like books, next to the Holy Bible, I recommend to the perusal of all private Christians, as being easy and plain to common capacities, and some of the most generally useful, instructing, awakening, soul-searching, and heart-warming pieces, that I have seen among human writing, and which have been blessed to the edification of many thousands.

A third secret Duty on the Lord's day, is meditation upon divine subjects.

This duty is proper every day, much more on the Sabbath, which is sequestrated for divine employments. It is the character of the blessed man, that "he meditates on God's law day and night," Psalm i. 2. It is an useful and necessary duty; it excites the affections, and quickens the graces; it strengthens faith, Psalm cxix. 92. it nourisheth hope, and inflames our love: deep musing makes the fire to burn. Meditation is a great help to every duty, Psalm cxix. 59. It helps to read and hear the word aright, and to know the truths thereof practically; it helps to pray, and yields matter to the tongue, Psalm xlv. 1. It prompts us to confess sin, and mourn for it, Psalm li. 3.

Be persuaded then to engage your hearts to this necessary but much neglected duty; for, though it be most useful and profitable, yet I know no duty more slighted and forgotten. The best of God's people have cause to lament this most bitterly before the Lord: Who can say with David, Psalm cxix. 97. "O how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day?" As for the generality of the world,

they have no sense of the obligation of this duty upon their spirits; they live without thinking, and that proves their ruin. O! if sinners would retire from company, and spend some little time now and then in secret thinking, it would, through the blessing of God, work some change in them. I remember a passage I have read of a dying father, that on his death-bed left it as a charge upon his only son, who was a great prodigal, "That he should spend a quarter of an hour every day in retired thinking;" and, to encourage him to undertake it, he gave him liberty to choose any subject he pleased. The son thinks this an easy task, and engages to do it; and accordingly sets himself to perform his promise: One day he thinks on his bypast pleasures, another day he contrives his future delights; after a while, he begins to reason with himself what was his father's design in laying this task upon him; at length he thinks his father was a wise and good man, and therefore intended and hoped, that among the rest of his meditations, he would some time or other think of religion. When this had truly possest his thoughts, one thought and question comes upon the back of another, about his bypast life and future state, that he could not contain himself in so short a confinement as a quarter of an hour, but was that night without sleep; yea, and afterwards could have no rest, till he became seriously religious.

O careless sinner, if you think it too much to spend a quarter of an hour every day, I would beg it of you to spend a quarter of an hour every Lord's day in retired thinking upon some spiritual subject: Who knows what it might produce? Do you say that this is a hard task? Will it not be far harder to lie in hell a whole eternity thinking on your bypast folly, when there is no remedy? O sinner, will you perish for want of thinking?

Be not scared at the difficulty of it; for though at first this duty seem hard, and corrupt nature shew aversion to it, yet press your heart to it, and afterwards you shall find it pleasant. Though it be difficult to climb this mount of meditation, yet, when once we get up, we will be ready to say with Peter, on the mount of transfiguration, "It is good for us to be here." David found it so, "My meditation of him shall be sweet," Psal. civ. 34. The more we meditate on God, the sweeter we will find him: yea, so sweet did the Psalmist find this duty, that he spent whole days in it,

Psal. cxix. 97. and, as if the day had been too little, he borrows a part of the night too, Psal. lxiii. 6.

Object. "Alas! (some say) our minds are barren of good thoughts."

Ans. 1. If you would accustom yourselves more to the duty, you would have less ground of complaint this way. 2. When your hearts are barren, there are two subjects you can never exhaust; fix your thoughts upon any one of them, viz. God's mercies to you, and your sins against him. The Psalmist acknowledges them both to be innumerable, in the same psalm, Psal. xl. 5. 12.

Quest. What subjects of meditation are most proper for the Sabbath day?

Ans. Natural things may be spiritualized, and common things may afford us ground for spiritual instructions, if we had our eyes enlightened, and our minds spiritually exercised. But it is fit that on the Sabbath we choose those subjects of meditation that are most edifying, and most suitable to the great ends of the day. In general, we ought this day to think upon God, upon ourselves, and upon eternity. But, more particularly,

I. Meditate upon the goodness of God: both that which is common, and manifested to you in his works of creation and providence, and that which is special and distinguishing, discovered to you above others. That this is a suitable subject for the Sabbath, is clear to any that reads the xcii. Psalm with its title.

1. Think upon his common goodness to us, represented in that great looking-glass of the creation. He hath made the world a commodious habitation for us, arched it over with the bespangled heavens, and floored it with the solid earth. He hath set up great lights in it for our accommodation: He hath placed a tabernacle for the sun, at a due distance from the earth and the upper heavens, to enlighten the stars above and enliven the earth below. And, that we might neither be starved with cold, nor burnt up with heat, he gives us the clouds as fans to screen us from the scorching heat, and as cisterns to water the parched ground: He gives us the wind to purify the air, the sea to be a pond for fish, the valleys to be granaries for corn, the mountains to be a treasure of minerals, the rivers to be as veins to carry refreshment to every part of the earth. Let us admire both

the goodness and wisdom of God displayed in his wonderful works, Psal. civ. 24. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches." The Psalmist also saith. "The heavens declare the glory of God," Psal. xix. 1. and indeed we may look up and read it in the shining capital letters of sun, moon, and stars. His being is legible in their existence; his wisdom in their frame; his power in their motion; his goodness in their usefulness, and his faithfulness in their continuance. The book of nature, as well as the scriptures, shews much of God to us. "This book (as one saith) consists of three leaves, heaven, earth, and sea; the creatures therein are so many letters, whereby we may spell out the attributes of God: some whereof are capital letters, and more legible than others. Man is a capital letter on earth, the sun in the heavens, and the whale in the sea.

Again, we ought to meditate upon his goodness manifested in his works of providence. He hath curiously formed us in the womb, and carefully watched over us therein. He preserved us several months in that dark cell, without air or breath. He brought us safe out of it, and presently thereafter provided two bottles to sustain us, and ever since hath succoured us in distress, rescued us from danger, supplied us in wants; yea, he hath set us at his own table, and made us live upon his cost, Acts xvii. 28. He hath given us all the creatures for our use and service, yea the most glorious of them; the angels are our ministering spirits, the lower heavens serve to give us breath, the middle heavens to give us light and heat, and the highest heavens afford us a dwelling place. The sun shines, the fire burns, the wind blows, and the water flows; nay, all the creatures are at work, both day and night, and all for the service of a poor worm of six feet long.

If a friend give us our bread for a month or two, we think ourselves much bound to him; but how much more beholden are we to God, who keeps an open free table for us all the days of the year, and all the years of our life, and even to us when enemies to him? Behold, those who have their mouths opened wide against God, he mercifully puts bread in their mouths. How great is God's goodness to us! and how great is our ingratitude to him! I know not which of them we should most wonder at. God gives us peace, money, health and wealth; but, instead of serving him there-

with, many offer them up in a sacrifice to the devil and base lusts, according to Hos. ii. 8. God gives some folk strength, and they waste it among harlots : to others money, and they waste it in drunkenness and prodigality ; to others power, and they waste it in oppression : to others honours, and they abuse it to pride and vain-glory. Many make use of the mercies of God as darts to shoot against the heavens ; they pervert and misapply them for dishonouring God, wounding Christ, and grieving the Spirit ; for debauching their bodies, damning their souls, and dashing both tables of the law in pieces before God's face. And yet, even while they are doing so, God is guarding them by his providence, and feeding them by his bounty. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works," to such undeserving and ill-deserving creatures ! We ought this day to "triumph in the works of his hands," according to Psal. xcii. 5. and cry, "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him ?"

2. Meditate this day upon God's special and distinguishing goodness to us beyond others, both with respect to soul and body : he hath not dealt so with any nation as with us. Both our national and personal mercies are singular, and ought this day to be remembered by us. Hath not God delivered many of you from death, when some dangerous accident, or violent sickness, was threatening to break the slender twig of life, and to let you fall into the grave, and into hell both at once ? Hath he not mercifully recovered you, and given you further space and place for repentance.

Hath not God long preserved this land from the famine, sword and pestilence. and such destroying judgments as have been making havock in other nations about us, laying heaps upon heaps ? He hath mercifully removed that dearth and scarcity wherewith we were almost consumed some years ago, when the poor swooned in the streets, and fainted in the highways for want of bread. God had secured our lives, liberties and estates, from rapine and violence, and lengthened out our peace and tranquillity, when other nations have been turned into a seat of war and sea of blood.

Consider the goodness of God to us this day, that we are not among the Jews, or Pagans on the earth, that never heard the news of Christ : or among the damned in hell,

who are beyond the reach of the offers of Christ. Let us also bless God, that we live not under the Old Testament times, but under the New not under that darker and harsher dispensation of the covenant by Moses, whose first miracle was the "turning of water into blood;" but under the clearer and sweeter dispensation of the Messiah, whose first miracle was the "turning of water into wine," that cheers the heart of man; and hath mercifully freed us from the heavy yoke of Levitical sacrifices and ceremonies.

Let us also this day thankfully remember God's goodness in delivering us from the yoke of Antichristian tyranny, Popery, idolatry, and persecution, and frequently blasting the hellish plots and contrivances of our enemies against the gospel and Protestant religion, and preserving us from being invaded in our consciences, or cut off from the well of salvation, and barred from the springs of ordinances, and having our teachers murdered or driven into corners. Let us bless God, that we have the peaceable enjoyment of pure ordinances under the protection of Protestant magistrates, and are allowed to serve God according to our consciences, to read the Bible in our own tongue, and examine the doctrines delivered to us by this rule; and that we are not under the tyranny of bloody papists, forced to hide or burn our Bibles, to bow to stocks and stones; or otherwise in hazard ourselves to be burnt in fires, or banished our native land.

Let us bless God that we live in a land of light, "a valley of vision, while others about us "sit in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death:" and that he allows us such rich gospel feasts, while others are visited with cleanness of teeth, and a famine of the word of God: that every Sabbath day there is a free market of grace publicly proclaimed in our ears, whilst others enjoy silent Sabbaths; yea, though we have slighted his goodness, and loathed the manna and honey-comb his goodness is renewed and continued with us. "What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us?"

II. Another subject of meditation upon the Lord's day, is the work of man's redemption this day completed by Christ's resurrection.

This is a subject the angels are still prying into; and ought not we much more, who are the persons immediately

concerned? Christ never testified such love to them, he never forgave them one sin, he never shed one drop of blood for them; and shall not we, for whom he poured out streams of blood, and to whom he hath forgiven ten thousand talents, be employed in prying into this mystery?

1. Meditate upon the spring of this work, God's infinite free love, that moved him to pity lost mankind, and contrive a way to redeem them; when in the mean time, he passed by a world of fallen angels, who were the elder brothers by creation, had a more natural claim to the inheritance, and might have been far more serviceable to their Maker than we: Yet, behold, there is not one word of their redemption, no sacrifice provided for them: there is not one devil spared, not one of all the thousands of fallen angels recovered; God presently took vengeance on them all. But O how did his bowels yearn, his heart pity, and his eyes spare poor fallen man in his miserable condition! Indeed he drove Adam out of Paradise, but it was a wonder he drove him not presently out of the world into hell, where he had a little before plunged far more excellent creatures than Adam was. Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but he was content to clothe himself with the rags of human flesh, that he might become our Saviour. O glorious incomprehensible love!

2. Think upon the wise contrivance of our redemption. It would have eternally nonplussed the wisdom of angels, to find out a method how to satisfy God's justice, and secure man's happiness both at once; how to save the life of the law-breaker, and yet maintain the honour of the law-maker. But here is a way to do both; here is a device for reconciling justice and mercy, and satisfying both their demands. Sin is severely punished, as justice required, and yet the sinner is pardoned, as mercy pleaded. It would never have entered the thoughts of angels, that God would have parted with his Son and their Lord, to die a cursed death for vile worms; it would have been blasphemy for any to have thought or spoken it. Though fallen man might have had the liberty to choose any way of redemption he pleased, he could never have proposed this. Indeed, when he had been perishing, he might have cried, O Son of God, have mercy on us; but who would have said, O Son of God, come make thyself a man, come die a cursed death, come

suffer hell's pains for me? This noble device was bred only in the breast of the eternally wise God; for, had he waited till men or angels had devised a way of our redemption, we had been miserable to all eternity. But what do I speak! the wonders of man's redemption can never be told. Here is a large subject for meditation and admiration, that can never be exhausted by men or angels to all eternity. Let this work be the delight of our souls, especially on the Lord's day. O believers, think much this day upon the love of your Redeemer; remember what he hath done and suffered for you; consider how much he hath given and forgiven you; view what he hath laid up for you; think what he hath performed and promised to you; and so you will not want matter of meditation.

III. Another subject of meditation on the Lord's day, is our state: and here we may take a view of man's fourfold state. 1. What he once was in a state of innocency. 2. What he now is in a state of nature. 3. What he may be in a state of grace. 4. What he shall be in a state of glory.

O sinner, retire this day and think on your misery. If thou be yet in a state of nature, thou art without God and without Christ in the world, thou sleepest and walkest in danger of hell; thou liest still under the heavy load of unpardoned guilt, there is not one of all the numberless millions of your sins forgiven, and they are heavier than ten thousand millstones hung about your neck; for every one of them hath the fearful curses of the law hanging at them; and in the mean time thou liest on the very brink of the fiery furnace, like a man sleeping on the top of the mast in time of a storm; there is but one step betwixt thee and eternal death, nothing but a rotten thread of life keeps thee from dropping into everlasting burnings. Thou knowest not, when thou risest in the morning, but ere night thou mayest make thy bed in hell; and when thou liest down, thou canst not tell but thou shalt wake in the flames; all the men in the world, nay all the angels in heaven, cannot assure thee of the contrary. O what a doleful condition is this, to be always in a state of damnation, not sure to be one hour out of hell. A serious meditation upon your natural state, O sinner, might cause your heart of stone to tremble.

But hast thou any happiness while thou art on this side of hell? No, surely, for your best worldly comforts and enjoyments are accursed to you: "Thou art cursed in the city, cursed in the field, cursed in thy basket and thy store, cursed in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy ground," Deut. xxviii. 15. Nay, every bit of bread thou eatest, the curse of God goes down with it. All your blessings turn into curses, and your mercies into judgments; "your table is a snare to you, the word is the savour of death," and the sacraments are seals of condemnation to you. The best actions you perform are but an abomination to God; they bring the more guilt upon your head, and treasure up the more wrath against you. Better you had perished in infancy, than continue to live in a Christless state; for, the longer you live, still the more miserable you are; for every day, every night, every hour you live, you heat the furnace hotter by your new actions, which are all sins, even the very best of them. O is this a state to be continued in? Canst thou lie down contentedly to sleep another night in this condition? God forbid that thou live and die in this state; for, if thou dost, thou wilt rise in the same condition at the last day. Nay, your state then will be more dreadful than ever, for then thou wilt see above thee the Judge frowning, beneath thee hell gaping, within thee conscience gnawing, without thee the world burning; on the right hand your sins accusing, on the left hand the devils terrifying, the good angels keeping thee out of heaven, and the evil angels pulling thee down to hell. O poor Christless souls, continue to think on this subject till your heart begin to melt, your eyes to weep, and your tongue to cry, "O what shall I do to be saved? O that I knew where to find Christ! O to be found in him! I would give ten thousand worlds to be sure of this; it will be terrible if death or a tribunal find me before I be found in him." Is it not worth your while to spend some time upon this soul-concerning subject? Hath not God given you reason for this very end; and will you not exercise it? Can you think to be saved otherwise? Do you expect that God will carry you to heaven like a stone, or save you without or against thy will? doth the world and your bodies deserve to be remembered the whole day, or whole week, or year throughout? and doth not God and your soul deserve to be thought on one day in the week, or one hour of the day? Say not

that you have no spare time for this work; for, if you will spare none of your own time for it, I beseech you to spend God's time well this way. Is it not better to spend some part of the Sabbath in thinking upon your soul's state, than in thinking upon the world? Spiritual things, alas! trouble you little on week-days, and why should worldly things intrude upon God's day?

2. Think upon your happiness, if you be in a state of grace, and in Christ; you are delivered from the guilt of sin, from Satan's fetters, from the law's curses, from death's sting, and hell's terror. Thou hast now peace with God; justice itself is thy friend; all thy enjoyments are sweetened by Christ's love: all your afflictions sanctified by his blood. God himself is your God, your Father, your Friend, your Portion: yea, all things are yours.

IV. Death is a proper subject to be meditated upon on the Sabbath day; for in the xcii. Psalm, wherein the exercises of the Sabbath are described, God calls and teaches us to consider our latter end. First, the end of the workers of iniquity, who, though they spring up as grass, and flourish for a season, shall yet in the end be destroyed for ever, ver. 7. 9. And again, the latter end of the godly, whose horn, though it be abased to the dust for a while, yet in the end, shall be exalted. It is one principal work of ministers this day, to be proclaimers of mortality, and remembrancers of death, according to Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8 So then it is our duty every Sabbath to have serious thoughts of death. Think with yourselves, What if this be the last Sabbath that ever I will see on earth? I may be called to die, before I be called to hear another offer of Christ; Have I sitten the gospel summons this Sabbath, to come and embrace Christ, or to surrender my heart to him? What if get a summons by death to come and appear before him before the next Sabbath? this I cannot sit. Death is a bold messenger, he cannot be resisted; when he comes and takes a man by the throat, the proudest, stoutest, and strongest in the world, must go, whether willing or unwilling, all is one. There are many in the world, at the church, in health this Sabbath, who will be on a death-bed, or in eternity, the next, and, why may not I be one of them?

Think seriously upon your latter end: Think what will be your case in a parting hour, where you will take up your

lodging, whether in Abraham's bosom, or in the devil's arms? O what will be my thoughts, when I am taking my last look of husband, wife, children, and relations? What will be my cordial, when the world fails, when friends are weeping round my bed. when my senses are losing their office, my heart and eye-strings are breaking, and all turning dim and dark about me? O, what if my sleepy conscience awake then, and my old buried sin revive and fall on me, to tear me in pieces?" O what will Christless sinners do in that hour, when there is but one single step betwixt their departing souls and the state of devils? O it is fearful to die in your sins, as it is threatened, John viii. 24. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." O better die in a dungeon, among toads and serpents, than die in your sins; for these are serpents that never leave stinging, and will fasten so upon thee, as never to part with thee again: they will go to the grave with thee as thy companions, to a tribunal with thee as thy accusers, and to hell with thee as thy tormentors. O it is terrible to die out of Christ, and without sight of an interest in him; to make a leap in the dark over a bottomless gulf, not knowing where your feet may light; or to launch into the great ocean of eternity, without sight of a landing place for your soul. O how will the poor soul shrink back into the body in such a case, when it begins to awake out of its dream, and look out into another world, saying, "How shall I venture forth, where I see nothing but darkness and horror, or a flaming sword ready to meet me?"

Think upon the continual hazard you are in of death; its arrows are flying thick about you, and many are falling slain on every hand of you; and God knows but the next dart may hit thee: and what if thou be unprepared, and hell follow the pale horse?

Think upon the sottish stupidity of many, who though they stand tottering day and night upon the brink both of the grave and hell, yet can spend whole weeks, yea months, without a serious thought of eternity: yea, in the house of mourning, and in the sight of the dead, they can think, talk, jest and laugh, and never have one grave thought or word about their latter end. Foolish sinners are rightly compared to a company of blind men dancing about the mouth of a very deep pit, which they do not perceive, nor hear the

groans of those who fall to the bottom of it: now and then one drops in, but still the rest continue the dance. This day a swearer dies, and tumbles into hell; the next a drunkard, the next a whoremonger: but still their companions in sin go on in their mad career, till they drop in too.

Think what a fearful surprise death is to many careless sinners; it lights upon them like a falcon out of the air; they must flit, and they were not thinking on it; they have their lodging to seek, and they know not where. O it is sad to be turned out of the clay tabernacle, and to be put to knock, and cry, "Lodging, lodging, for God's sake;" and yet get no answer but a frown, or, "Depart from me, I know you not!" What cause have we to pray, "Lord, let us not have our work to do, when our day is done; our weapons to seek when the enemy is at the gates; our oil to buy, when the market is ended, and the bridegroom come."

Think also upon the happiness of a dying believer, who can go forth half way and meet death, and bid it welcome as a friend. Death ends his sorrow, and begins his joy.—It is an outlet to misery, and an inlet to happiness; it frees him of his greatest grievance in the world, that is sin. As sin was the womb that brought forth death, so death is the tomb that buries sin; thus God in his wisdom, causes the daughter to destroy the mother; and hence it is, that death is put in the believer's inventory of goods, 1 Cor. iii. 22. "Death is theirs." It is their Father's servant sent to carry them home to their Father's house; to a place all bespangled with light, where they shall sigh no more, and, which is infinitely better, where they shall sin no more for ever. They shall be troubled no more with an ill heart, nor a tempting devil; they shall complain no more of darkness, and distance from God; but shall spend a whole eternity in praises, doxologies, hosannas, and hallelujahs to God and the Lamb. Think on the blessed change, O believer, that death will make in thy circumstances ere long. It will transport thee from a cottage to a palace, from a wilderness to Canaan, from a stormy sea to a safe shore, from a vile dunghill to a glorious city, a city whose walls and foundations are of precious stones, its streets of gold, and its gates of pearl; whose light is the Lamb, and whose temple is God. Hast thou not cause then to love the Lord Jesus Christ,

who has provided this city for thee, and found out a way to it; who by his death has unstinged death, and by his blood has paved a way through its dark valley for thee to walk in, and fear no ill? O believer, fear not though the entry be somewhat dark, the passage is safe, and the end is light; the day is short betwixt thee and home; 'tis but wink and see God.

Lastly. Think often how holily and spiritually you will wish you had spent this day, when you come to a death-bed, and death and eternity begin to stare you closely in the face. You will then begin to wish, O that I had spent more of my time, and especially of the Lord's day, in meditation and prayer! O if God would try me again, how serious and diligent would I be! Consider, on the other hand, what a pleasant death-bed the righteous will have, who have spent the Sabbath religiously; what satisfaction they will have in the review thereof! and what comfort in the prospect of an everlasting Sabbath above, to which they are hastening! They will be rejoicing when others about them are weeping: they will be smiling when their eye-strings are breaking, and inward strength failing. They will be longing to be with Christ, which is best of all. It was a choice saying of one near death, "My head is in heaven, my heart is in heaven, it is but one step more, and I shall be all in heaven." And must not the latter end of such be peaceable and pleasant? Many doubtless, with Balaam, would wish to die their death, however ill they like their life; many, like that young man, who said to his loose companion, (after they had visited holy ambrose on his death-bed, and saw how cheerfully he was triumphing over approaching death) "O that I might live with thee, and die with Ambrose!" But it is in vain to think to dine with Satan and lusts in this world, and hereafter to sup with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. vi. 7.

V. Another subject of meditation on the Sabbath-day, is the saints' everlasting rest and employment in heaven.—You are called this day to have frequent thoughts of it, since the Sabbath is an emblem thereof, and serves to keep us in mind of it. Take care then, O believer, to spend every Sabbath in the view of heaven, and live every Sabbath as it were to be your last, and behave this day as one that

believes you may be in heaven before the next Lord's day, celebrating an eternal Sabbath.

Let your worship this day below, put you in mind of that more perfect worship above, where you shall see him whom you worship, and enjoy immediate communion with him. O the difference betwixt that worship there, and ours here, is great! There is no weariness there in beholding God, no wanderings nor excursions of the heart from God, no inclinations there to drowsiness or sleep in worship, no dull or low conceptions of God, no deadness of heart or frame; their harps are never out of tune, their hearts are always up, and fit for the high praises of God. There is no note lower there than "Glory to God in the highest;" every saint sings his hallelujahs on the highest key, and all of them join harmoniously in the work of praising God with one heart and soul. Are congregational assemblies of saints so pleasant on earth, especially when they jointly and melodiously sing God's praise? O what will it be then, when they all meet above in that great "general assembly of the church of the first born," together with the "innumerable company of angels," and there with one heart and voice sing God's praises? How ravishing will it be, to hear that eternal music of the bride-chamber, that sweet melody of the church triumphing, where there is no jarring string, no displeasing sound, no discord between heart and tongue, no willows there to hang their harps upon, no bad news to be heard, no sad sight to be seen, no evil to be felt or feared to all eternity. Poor discouraged believers, are ye now troubled with ill hearts and vain thoughts? Are ye plagued with wandering and wearying hearts in duty?—These complaints ere long shall be taken out of your mouths; read Eph. v. 27. the church above "hath neither spot nor wrinkle." Once the glorified saints' faces were as black and wrinkled as yours, but now they have none: once their hearts were as bad as yours, but now they are as fixed "pillars in the temple of God, they go no more out."

Take a view this day, by faith, of the glorious company above; behold Christ upon his white throne, Paul with his crown of righteousness, and all the faithful ones in Abraham's bosom: how gloriously do they shine in the kingdom of their Father! The sun is a very glorious luminary, but it would be useless there, it would not be seen for the

brightness of the Lamb; nay, every saint shall be as glorious as that sun. Who can tell the happiness of the inhabitants of that place, where every head wears a royal crown, every hand a palm of victory, every eye overflows with joy, and every tongue with songs of praise? O believer, think with yourself, what a difference there is betwixt your state and theirs! "Oh, I am sighing, they are singing; I am sinning, they are serving God; I am groaning out my complaints, they are trumpeting forth God's praise; I am in darkness, and cannot see God; they dwell in light, and see him face to face. O my Lord, must I stay behind, when they are going? Must I lie groaning and sighing here, while they are triumphing above, and dividing the spoil? My Lord is gone and left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends are gone to their blessed rest, and must I wander in the wilderness, absent from home, far distant from my Father and my God? Shall I be satisfied in this state? No, I will look after them with a longing eye; I will lie knocking at the gate till God open to let me in; I will still pant, breathe, and cry, O Lord, how long! how is my pilgrimage prolonged! How am I detained in this valley of tears, wandering in the dark, and can scarce get any sight of Canaan! When shall the days of my banishment be finished, that I may get home to my country and friends above? O when shall I sit at the fountain head, and drink plentifully of the living streams that make glad the city of God?

O believer, rejoice in the forethoughts of that day, when thou shalt meet with thy father and thy brethren, and when thou shalt see thy elder Brother on the throne ready to pass sentence in thy favour. O how sweet will it be, when he is frowning and thundering against the wicked, to see him turn and smile on thee as thy Redeemer! O what love will be in his looks! what melody will that sentence sound in thy ears, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," &c. How ravishing a surprise, O believers, will it be to meet with your godly acquaintances, with whom ye prayed, praised, and conversed here! O then, may ye rejoice together, and say, "This voice of joy we now hear, is not like our old groans and complaints, nor like the oaths, curses, and reproaches our ears were grated with on earth. What is become of our hard hearts, our worldly unbelieving hearts? Where are all

our lusts, corruptions, temptations and burdens now? What is become of a body of death, indwelling sin that lay so long on us as a dead weight? What is become of the church's enemies we often complained of? O! these are all gone, they shall trouble you no more; you shall triumph over them, as Israel did on the other side of the Red sea, when they saw the Egyptians drowned and lying dead upon the shore: These Egyptians, O believer, whom thou once sawest to thy great vexation and trouble, "thou shalt see them again no more."

I might mention many other subjects of meditation proper for the Sabbath; such as the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, the worth of the soul, the sufferings of Christ, the last judgment, and many others, which the sermons you hear that day will bring to your remembrance: But, fearing that I have been too tedious already on this head, I must pass them, and proceed to another private duty necessary on the Lord's day; which is,

IV. *Self-examination.*

This duty is near of kin to the former, it being a sort of reflexive meditation, the mind turns inward and communes with itself, according to Psalm iv. 4. It is absolutely necessary that we should take some time to commune with ourselves, and ask what we are, what we have been, and what we have done, Jer. viii. 6. And is not the Sabbath a fit time for this duty, when we retire from the noise of the world, and are not disturbed with secular affairs? This is a most important duty, and nearly concerns our eternal well being; but yet it is a duty very much neglected. Many have lived fifty or sixty years in the world, who never spent one hour in communing with their own hearts: There are many going out of the world, who never yet began to inquire why they came into it, and never yet asked the question at their souls, Are you to go hence, or live here for ever? Why came you hither, and where are you to lodge when you go hence? Many live in a crowd of worldly business, are hurried from one thing to another, leap out of their beds to the world in the morning, and from the world to their beds again at night, and so never find one minute on the week days to take their soul aside; and, for the Sabbath, though they have time for it, yet such is their aver-

sion to the work, they shift it all they can, and avoid meeting with themselves; they rather converse with any in the world than with their own hearts. It is against self-love and carnal ease, for a man to turn his own accuser and judge: therefore many would rather drudge and toil their bodies whole days and weeks at the sorest labour, ere they spent one quarter of an hour at this exercise; and so they live their whole lives strangers to themselves. We would think it strange to hear of two men that conversed every day for fifty or sixty years space, and yet all this while did not know one another; and yet this is the case betwixt many and their souls: for as long as they have lived together, they are utterly unacquainted, they never turn inward to converse with themselves, they have no serious thoughts about their own state or condition. It is said of the rich man in the parable, Luke xvi. that "in hell he lift up his eyes," as if he had never considered nor bethought himself till that time; and indeed it is the want of retired consideration, and people's serious bethinking of themselves, that is the ruin of many thousands. O then, resolve in God's strength, that in spite of the devil and your own corruption, you and your souls shall have a meeting, and live no longer asunder; that ye will imitate David, Psalm cxix. 59. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." Seeing then you have free time for this duty on the Lord's day, take your souls aside, and inquire into their state; say, "O my soul, where art thou? Art thou under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Dost thou belong to Christ's family or the devil's? Art thou in the narrow or broad way? Suppose I should die this night, (for God knows if ever I shall see the morrow's light,) what hope will I have in a dying hour? Where will death land me? Whether with God in heaven, or with devils in hell? Would Christ smile on me in the dark valley, or be my advocate at God's bar? Is there any saving change yet wrought on my heart and life by a work of conversion? God forbid I undergo my great and final change till this happy change be wrought. Can I say, I am not the man that once I was; "once I was blind, but now I see?" Study and inquire into the marks of the converted and unconverted, with the greatest seriousness and anxiety of soul, and see which of them you can apply to yourself; cry, that God may open a window in your breast, to let you see into your own heart

and soul's state; and whatever you be deceived in, beg it of him, that he may not suffer you to be deceived on this momentous point, where your soul and your all is at stake. And if you find yourself in a bad state, "give no rest to your eyes, no slumber to your eye-lids," till, in God's strength, you resolve on a thorough change.

Lastly. It is incumbent on every private Christian on the Lord's day, to practise the works of charity and mercy, both to the souls and bodies of men. Study to promote the edification of others by good counsels, instructions, admonitions, and reproofs. Comfort the afflicted, supply those that are in straits, visit the sick and those that are in misery. These are proper duties on the Sabbath, and God is highly pleased with them, James i. 27. If we practise these duties conscientiously, we may both do good and get good; we may both give direction and comfort to the distressed, and receive instruction and comfort to ourselves. Though we may not inquire at the dead, we may learn many wholesome lessons from the dying. And would to God that both the persons visiting and visited were more spiritual in their converse than ordinarily they are! for then this duty would be found very edifying and profitable. But if, when we visit the sick this day, we spend the time in worldly discourse, and not for the spiritual advantage of the sick and others present, we profane the Sabbath, instead of sanctifying it.

Do we see some oppressed by continual slumbering and sleeping, when death is supposed to be near, so that they cannot think on their everlasting state? Let this teach us to remember our latter end, and awake our souls to their work, while we are in health.

Do we see others troubled with ravings? Let it teach us to employ our reason for our souls advantage, while we have the use of it.

Do we see some sadly discomposed with extreme pains and agonies? Let it mind us to dispatch our work while health and ease remain with us.

Do we observe their sight failing, tongue faultering, or hearing growing worse? O let this teach us to make a covenant with our eyes, and turn them away from beholding vanity; to use our tongues for God's glory, and beware of

abusing them now, while we have the use of them; and to employ our ears for hearing spiritual instructions, while they are in case for it.

DIRECTION III.

Concerning the Special Order, Method and Manner, wherein the Duties of the Sabbath are to be performed.

THE Lord requires us not only to take heed to the matter of our duties, but also the manner of them; not only to do what is good, but to do it well. As we must seek God in due ordinances, so we must seek him in a due order, 1 Chron. xv. 13. Very much depends upon the circumstances of our actions, therefore we must look narrowly to them.

That we may take a view of the sanctification of the Sabbath complexly, and the order and circumstances of the duties therein required, there are three things to be considered:

1. What is requisite in order to prepare for the Sabbath, before it come.

2. What is requisite in performing the duties of the Sabbath when it is come.

3. What is requisite at the end of the Sabbath, or when the work thereof is over.

1. *Concerning our Preparation for the Sabbath.*

As to the first, that it is needful to prepare for the Sabbath, cannot be denied, if we consider the word *remember*, prefixed to the commandment; "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." We must remember it before it come, so as to provide for it. Moses calls the people, Exod. xvi. 23. to mind that "to-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath."

Again, if we consider the nature of the Sabbath work, and our unfitness for it, preparation for it will be found very needful. We are called this day to make solemn and near approaches to that God who is a glorious Spirit, and to hold communion with him who is infinitely holy; and is it not

very necessary that we who are naturally carnal, and much involved in worldly business through the week, should endeavour to abstract our thoughts, from earthly things, that we may draw nigh to so great a God upon this holy day? For holy performances God requires us to make holy preparations; and therefore David saith, Psal. xxvi. 6. "I will wash mine hands in innocency, so shall I compass thine altar, O Lord." The mariner that intendeth a voyage, he not only provides his tackling, but he is careful before he sail, to put his ship off from the land, that he may catch the first fair wind. In like manner, Christian, if thou wouldst launch heavenwards upon the Lord's day, be concerned to get the vessel of thy heart put off from the earth on the evening before.

Wert thou a person of great quality and estate, and the king should send thee word that he would dine with thee to-morrow, thou wouldst make preparation for his entertainment the day before, by cleansing the house, and putting all things in order, suitable to the dignity of so great a prince. Now, when King JESUS gives thee notice before hand, that on such a day he is to sup with thee, wilt thou not testify thy respect to so great a potentate, by making preparation for him? When Christ prepares a table for thee in the gospel, and furnishes it with all the dainties of heaven, pardon, peace, love, grace, and eternal life; shouldst thou not empty thy stomach, cleanse thy heart, adorn thy soul, and make ready, to feast with thy Redeemer? At this gospel table others sit and feed, their souls are filled with marrow and fatness, and their mouths praise the Lord with joyful lips; but alas! many have no stomach; they can eat little, and savour nothing. Their stomachs are foul, their hearts unclean; the world fills their thoughts; they taste no goodness in hearing, in prayer, in praises, or any duty of God's worship: Why? They are at no pains beforehand to empty their minds of the world, and prepare for this heavenly fare.

Reader, were I to counsel thee how to improve a market day, so as thou mightst gain much wealth and treasure, I doubt not but thou wouldst hearken to me: And wilt thou not regard me, when I am to advise thee how to spend the Lord's day, the market day for thy soul, so as thou mayest get thee true treasure, even durable riches and

righteousness? Lay aside worldly cares, remember, and prepare for this market-day, before it come and beg skill from God how to improve it aright to the e[illegible]ching of thy soul. Anciently there were laws obliging [illegible]le to lay aside their work at such a particular hour o[illegible] Saturday's afternoon, that they might remember and prepare for the Sabbath; likewise it was a custom in some places to have public divine exercise and worship on the Saturday's evening; so that, at the ringing of a bell for it, people gave over their work, and repaired to the church to worship God, and hear something suitable and preparatory to the Sabbath. I cannot but commend this practice, as a good way to conclude and shut up all the labours and cares of the week, and publicly to give God thanks for prospering the works of our hands; and also to confess and mourn for the carnality of our hearts, and our little minding of Christ and heaven in our weekly business, and our manifold shortcomings in our duties both to God and man, and our forgetting and not practising through the week the sermons we heard the preceding Sabbath. Likewise it is a good way to take off our hearts from the world, and to compose and spiritualize the thoughts for the work of the approaching Sabbath; and also to pray and wrestle together for a blessing on the same, and for special assistance to ministers and people in the duties of the day, that the ensuing Sabbath may be one of the best Sabbaths we ever had, and that it may be one of the days of heaven to our souls.

But more particularly, the preparation needful for the Sabbath consists in these things:

1. In your dispatching and ordering your labour and businesss through the week, with such prudence and foresight that it may nowise hinder or disturb you on the Sabbath-day.

2. In leaving off your work timely the night before, and going seasonably to rest, that both your servants and you may be in case to rise early on Sabbath morning, and not to be drowsy or sleepy through the day. It is a great encroachment upon the Sabbath that some are guilty of, they sit up and work later on Saturday's night than any other night of the week; thay lie longer on Sabbath morning than any other day; they go sooner to bed on Sabbath night than any other night, and they rise sooner on Mon-

day morning than any other day of the week. Now, what is this but a grudging God his due time, a wearying of his day, and making it as short as you can, and seeking to win off it, if possible, for the Saturday's night and Monday's morning?

Under the law, the latter part of the day, preceding the Sabbath, was called "the day of preparation for the Sabbath," Luke xxiii. 54. intimating that it is our duty to prepare for the Sabbath before it come, and to do it upon the day preceding. Likewise, we find that Nehemiah ordered the gates of Jerusalem to be shut when it began to be dark before the Sabbath, Neh, xiii. 19. thereby teaching us timely to give over our trafficking and worldly business on the evening before the Lord's day, and not to follow our business too late, lest our thoughts be too much embarrassed with secular affairs, and we thereby indisposed for the religious duties of the ensuing holy day.

3. It would be a good way to prepare for the Lord's day, sometimes to take your children and servants on the Saturday's night, when you call them together for family-worship, and instruct them concerning the end and institution of the Lord's day which is approaching, and the nature of the service that is requisite upon it. The Lord commends Abraham for "commanding his household and children after him to keep the way of the Lord," Gen. xviii. 19. And he frequently directs the Israelites to instruct their children concerning the meaning of their rites and observation; and particularly concerning the passover, he saith, Exod. xii. 26, 27. "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians," &c. So in like manner, concerning the observation of the Lord's day, you should tell your families, "The day of sacred rest, now approaching, is a memorial of God's wonderful love to us, that when we were lost and undone by sin. cursed by the divine law, and excluded out of God's rest, our Lord Jesus Christ undertook a great work for us, to make up our peace, become our surety, and bear the curse and wrath due to us; and when he had so done, and finished his work of redemption, he, on the first day of the week, entered into his

rest by his resurrection, and thereby made known to us that we should keep this day as a day of holy rest to him, in remembrance of his glorious work, and as a pledge of our celebrating an everlasting Sabbath with him above, in admiring his love, and singing his praise. And therefore let us make suitable preparation for this solemn day, and the duties of it." Alas! the omission of such instructions as these to young persons, doth cause the observation of this day, with many, to be built only on custom and example; and hence follows the great neglect of Sabbath sanctification, which is so common among us.

4. If you would prepare for the Sabbath, call off your thoughts timely on Saturday's night, from worldly cares and business, that you may think on the great work of the approaching day: and labour to put yourselves in as solemn and as serious a frame, as if you were to die and step into eternity, and clear accounts at God's tribunal, or as if you were visibly to meet with God, and solemnly treat with him concerning your salvation.

As godly Nehemiah took care to shut the gates of Jerusalem on the evening before the Sabbath, that no burdens might be carried in on the Sabbath-day; so secure you the gates of your hearts on the Saturday's evening that no worldly thing may enter to disturb you in the performance of the great and solemn duties of the Sabbath.

5. Look back on the bypast week, and examine your actions therein as particularly as you can, and repent for all the sins thereof, whether of omission or commission, and flee to the blood of Christ to be cleansed from the guilt and filth of them; that so you may be prepared to appear before a holy God, who is "of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity." O seek to get all quarrels through the week removed, that you may have a reconciled God to meet with upon the Sabbath.

6. Study to have a deep sense of your wants upon your spirits, that you may get suitable supplies for them upon the Sabbath. If you were going to a great market next day, you would be thinking the night before what you wanted or needed thereat: The Sabbath is the great market day for your souls, when you may hear Christ crying, as Rev. iii. 18. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in

the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed," &c.

7. Think upon the great design of the Sabbath, the commemmoration of Christ's redeeming love ; and entertain serious and thankful thoughts of the goodness of God manifested in the glorious work of redemption ; and with godly Nehemiah, (Neh. ix. 14.) bless God for giving you the Sabbath, since it is such a pleasant and profitable day for the soul.

8. Beg earnestly for God's help to sanctify the Sabbath, and that God may put you in a spiritual frame for the work thereof, and that you may have grace to leave all your worldly care "at the bottom of the hill, while you go up into the mount to worship God, and return again to them." Beg that the sins of the bygone week, and the misimprovement of former Sabbaths, may not hinder God's presence upon the ensuing Sabbath. Pray that ministers may be directed to a suitable word for your soul's case, that your hearts may be prepared, your enemies restrained, and God's ordinances blessed, so that it may be a good day ; "a day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere."

And then, having so ordered and disposed matters, lay yourselves down to sleep in Christ's arms, and under his protection, leaving your hearts in heaven, that when you awake next morning, you may be still with God. Study to sleep, as well as "eat and drink, to the glory of God." Go to bed with this design, that your bodies may be refreshed, and fitted to serve your souls in the service of God upon the ensuing day.

II. *Concerning the Duties of the Sabbath.*

As to the second thing proposed, What things are requisite in doing the work of the Sabbath, when it is come? This is a large subject ; I shall reduce all I have to say upon it to three heads :

1. What is necessary before the public worship.
2. What is necessary in time of public worship.
3. What is to be done after the public worship is over.

As to the *first*, take these directions :

I. When you awake on Sabbath morning, rejoice at the

approach of this blessed day: As the birds chirp and sing at the dawning of the morning's light, so let believers account the light of this day sweet, as being a day of signal mercies, a day of communion with God, a day wherein the Spirit's dews fall upon the soul. As "Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day," John viii. 56. so ought you this morning, saying with the Psalmist, Psal. cxviii. 24. "This is the day the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it."

II. Let your souls be breathing forth holy meditations and ejaculations upon your very first awaking: Lift up your hearts in thanksgiving to God for that comfortable rest and sleep he hath vouchsafed to you the night past; for "it is he that giveth his beloved sleep," and who renews his mercies to us every morning. Likewise give up and dedicate yourselves wholly to God and his service this day: And, betwixt your waking and rising, you may have such meditations as these: "O if I could say this morning with Isaiah, chap. xxvi. 9. "With my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me will I seek thee early!"—Let me this morning awake early from sin to righteousness, 1 Cor. xv. 34. or that in Rom. xiii. 11, 12. "It is high time to awake out of sleep. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let me cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light." Or, think on your awaking out of the sleep of death, and arising out of the grave at the sound of the last trumpet, what a solemn wakening that will be. Or, think of God's goodness to thee, that thou awakest in life, health and safety this morning; and say, "What a mercy is it, that God has kept my house from firing, and falling on my head! that he hath chained up Satan, my enemy, that he could neither hurt nor fright me in a visible manner! Many have lain down this night without sleep, and been full of tossings to the dawning of the day; but, blessed be God, I have laid me down in peace, I have slept and waked again, and my sleep hath been refreshing. How would I value this mercy, if I were in sickness, and could not get sleep! Many have lain down and slept, but never waked again in this world, their first waking has been in eternity; and O! how sad, if it be in the flames of hell! But, O what shall I render to the Lord, that I wake again in the land of prayer, and of hope;

and upon a Lord's day morning, wherein I hope to hear again the joyful sound, and see his power and glory in the sanctuary ?"

If it is a summer morning, when the sun may be up and shining when thou awakest, then think, Christ the light of the world rose early this morning from the dark grave, wherein he lay buried for my sake. "The Sun of righteousness was up this day before the natural sun." Or, think, this is the day wherein God said, "Let there be light, and it was so." Is the light so sweet and is it so pleasant a thing for the eyes to behold the sun ? O how much more to see Christ the bright Morning-Star this day by the eye of faith, to see the Sun of righteousness shining in the firmament of gospel ordinances ! Let me rise and prepare for this sight ; O that my eyes may be cleared, and the mote taken out of the eye of faith, that I may this day see him, in comparison of whom the sun is but a dark clod of earth ! O my soul, rise from the earth this day, get the moon under thy feet, and clothe thyself with the Sun ; draw nigh to God in Christ, and set thy affections on things above: thou art capable of communion with God, do not debase thyself in raking always in the dunghill of this world, in licking the dust with the serpent, or feeding on husks with the swine, as if thou hadst no higher end to serve than the world. Why wilt thou lie among the pots, and wallow in the puddle, when crystal streams are so near ?

Or think, "How happy are the angels, who are exempted from the necessity of sleep ! They never rest, nor weary of God's work, but 'praise him day and night.' Behold, the sun never wearies to serve his Creator : How many thousand miles has the sun travelled since the last night I went to rest, that he might bring the light of a new Lord's day to me, a poor undeserving creature ! And, shall not I rise with cheerfulness to celebrate this day, and serve my God and Saviour upon it ? It is a mercy the natural sun is risen ; but a far greater, that the 'Sun of righteousness' is up, and hath ascended to his meridian, that he may the better diffuse the influences of light and heat upon poor cold and blind souls, such as I am ; I will get up this day, and lie in his way as he passeth by, and cry with the blind man, 'Son of David, have mercy upon me."

Lastly, The morning sun may mind thee of the danger of secure Christless souls. The sun shone bright on Sodom that morning it was destroyed: Little did they think that fair morning, that the clouds would gather on a sudden, and drop fire on their heads; neither knowest thou O Christless sinner, what a storm of wrath may fall on thee before night: Wherefore flee presently out of the Sodom of a natural state, to the Zoar of Christ's righteousness.

III. Rise full as early this day as on other days, and be as soon at God's work this day, as you are at your own work on other days. God is the best Master, his work the sweetest, and his wages the greatest. Yet alas! there are many who lie long on the morning of the Lord's day, they are loth to rise and fall to God's work; and when they rise, they have no time for secret and family duties before the public-worship: so that they are either slightly performed, or wholly neglected. O foolish sinner! dost thou think thy worldly business more worthy of thy early rising, than thy spiritual employment? Or, wilt thou shew greater regard to thy worthless body, than to thy gracious God, and thy precious soul! You owe thanks to God. that you have had the bypast week for your own affairs, and that now you have the prospect of another for them, and that God lets you see the first day of it; but O consider, that your Creator and Redeemer puts in for some time with you. All your time is not your own, neither is it in your own hands? God alone is the Author and Disposer of it. Well then, now is the time, this is the day that he requires: O let him have it wholly, seeing he gives you six times as much for yourselves. And grudge him not the morning of his own day. Remember that promise, Prov. viii. 17 "They that seek me early shall find me" In the morning the spirits are most fresh and lively, and fittest for contemplation and prayer. We are told, Exod. xvi. 13. that in the morning the dew and manna fell: Wouldst thou have the dew of a blessing to fall on thy soul, and to make thee as a watered garden? then rise early to wait for it. This was the practice of the saints; Job rose early and offered his sacrifices, Job. i. 5. David prevented the dawning of the morning with his prayers, Psal. cxix. 147. Christ rose early this day before the sun. And for what end did he rise? Even to justify and save his people. O believers, did your

Saviour rise early this morning to justify you, and will you not rise early this day to glorify him? This is the great design of the Sabbath. And the xcii. psalm, which is entitled, "A song for the Sabbath-day," saith, "It is good to shew forth God's loving kindness in the morning." Timely at God's work on this day, or diligence in it, will not prove prejudicial to health: for, since God hath pronounced a special blessing upon the Sabbath, you have ground to expect that less sleep, food and refreshment, than at other times, will be blessed for your support in his work, and that you shall live in the doing thereof.

IV. When you are up, hasten to put on your clothes, and spend as little time this day in dressing yourself as possible, that you may have time for secret duties, and retired converse with God. But since the body must be clothed this day, let your thoughts be well employed in the time you are doing it: Think on sin that was the cause of your soul's nakedness, and of your body's need of apparel. Remember from whom you have your clothes, to cover, keep warm, and adorn your bodies, even from God, it is his wool and his flax; therefore give thanks to him for your raiment, as well as your food. And though your clothes be not so fine as you would wish, yet mind, that "these of whom the world was not worthy, wandered about in sheep's skins and goat's skins:" And, if you be not so outwardly splendid as others, seek that decking which will "make you all glorious within." When others are following vain fashions, seek ye to be "covered with the robes of Christ's righteousness." And, since you are this day to make a solemn appearance before God your heavenly Father, you must be sure, like Jacob, to come in the garments of your elder Brother, otherwise you cannot expect your Father's blessing. Put no confidence in your own righteousness; for it is no better than rags, or a garment full of holes, the least whereof is sufficient to let in the curse of God upon you. Therefore "put on the Lord Jesus," if you would this day appear before God, and be accepted of him. Take care also, that your bodies this day be gravely and decently apparelled, and beware of pride and vanity this way, if ye would have God to own you; the adorning which he recommends, is not that "of plaiting the hair, wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel, but the hidden

man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Pet. iii 3, 4. Most people on the Sabbath are concerned to adorn their bodies with their best clothes; but, alas! who among you is careful to attire his soul as he ought on this day, when he is going to meet the blessed Redeemer of souls, the King of glory?

Mind your souls chiefly this day, and take care, whatever you be doing about your bodies, that your hearts be employed in spiritual meditations. Do you comb your head? you may think how numerous your sins are "more than the hairs of your head," so that "none can reckon them," Psal. xl. 12. And to be sure, if you cannot reckon them, you are far less able to reckon for them. Do you wash your hands! think on the necessity of "washing your hands in innocency, that so ye may compass the altar of God." For these that would "ascend the hill of God, and stand in his holy place, must have clean hands and pure hearts." Holiness both in heart and life is absolutely needful, in order to our enjoying communion with God in ordinances.

V. As soon as possibly you can, retire this morning for the duties of secret prayer, praise, reading the word, meditation, and self-examination. Much of the Sabbath, and especially the morning of it, should be spent in praise and thanksgiving, upon account of God's goodness both common and special, manifested in the works of creation and redemption. It is a most necessary and proper duty, to "shew forth God's loving kindness on the Sabbath morning," Psal. xcii. 2. Thanksgiving is the great end of the day, and of the mercies of it; "the redeemed of the Lord" ought this day to sing, "His mercy endureth for ever," Psal. cvii. 2. for God sent his Son to redeem us for this very end, that he might have from us "the praise of the glory of his grace," Eph. i. 6. 12. 14, And if you deny him praise, you do what you can to disappoint him of the design of this wonderful work. Many serious souls think the Sabbath should be spent only in prayer, mourning, mortification, &c. and almost wholly neglect the duty of praise, which ought to be the principal, and wherewith God is best pleased. Remember, that praise is not only the end of the day, but the end of your lives; yea, the design of all God's

works: God made man the tongue of the creation, to trumpet forth aloud what the rest of the creation do but silently whisper.

Directions in performing the foresaid duties.

BEFORE I proceed further, I shall give some special advices concerning the duties of secret reading, prayer, and self-searching.

I. *Of reading the Word.*

1. As to the reading of God's word, if you would do it with profit, then, 1. Look up to God for his blessing upon it; When you begin, pray that he may "open your eyes to see the wonders of it," and that he may "open your ears and hearts to hear and comply with it as the voice of God."

2. In reading the word, quicken yourselves to all possible attention. As children will rouse up themselve at the reading of their father's will, out of expectation of some portion or legacy bequeathed them therein by their father; so ought you to rouse up yourselves in reading of the word, in regard of the many rich and precious legacies which your Saviour hath bequeathed to you, in that last will and testament of his, sealed by his own blood.

3. Read the word with holy reverence, as if Jehovah himself stood by, and spake these words unto you; for reading is a kind of holy conference with God, and therefore ought to be gone about with a holy awe and concern. I do not mean that this reverence is to be shown to the paper and print, but the matter contained therein; though even these, as the dead bodies of saints, ought not to be used dishonourably, as I have heard some graceless merchants do, by rolling up their small wares in leaves of the Bible. Is this like the practice of the ancient martyrs, who made more account of a leaf of the Bible than of a treasure? And indeed the leaves of the Bible, in some sense, are the field where the treasure is hid, and the pearl of price may be found; they are the swadling clothes of the holy Jesus. And therefore, in the next place,

4. Have an eye to Christ in every thing ye read, for he is the end, scope, and substance of the whole Bible, and every thing in it is reducible to him.

5. Read it with application to yourselves, as if God spoke to you by name and surname in every line of it. Read it as if it were a letter sent straight from heaven to you, to warn you against sin, and to persuade you to faith and holiness. Let us accept of its reproofs and admonitions with thankfulness, and say, what a mercy is it that we may read our Father's will in our mother-tongue, and that God speaks his mind so plainly to us in his word ?

6. Mark the special passages of the word, either these that are most important in themselves, or most applicable to you. Mark the duties enjoined, and sins forbidden, with the promises to the one, and threatenings against the other: fasten these upon your memories, and hide them in your hearts; meditate on them, and pray that God may keep them in your minds, ready for use against the time of need.

II. *Of Secret Prayer.*

As for secret prayer, take these directions, if you would speed in it.

I. Be frequent in this duty, for your needs are many. God hath erected the "throne of grace for the time of need," Heb. iv. 16. And he hath left the more needs upon us, that he may the oftener hear from us; he loves to hear his people's voice, and great need have we to let him oft hear it; for we have many lusts to be subdued, many graces to be strengthened, many doubts to be resolved, and many grievances to be redressed: therefore be frequent in your addresses to God. Frequency begets familiarity, and familiarity confidence; we go boldly to his house whom we often visit. Eusebius tells us of the apostle James surnamed the Just, that he kneeled so oft and so long in secret prayer, that his knees become as callous and insensible as a camel's. And he tells us of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine the Great, that he kneeled very much in secret prayer: and, for an example to others, that he had his image on his coins, pictures, and statues, represented in the same praying posture, with his hands spread abroad, and his eyes lift up to heaven. King David was frequently in this exercise, Psal. lv. 17. "Evening, morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud." And, if that be not

enough, he says, Psal. cxix. 164. "Seven times a-day will I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments."

II. Affect privacy and retirement in it. Strive to let no ear hear but God's; for his ears are open to the most whispering prayers that can be put up. Not that we should be ashamed of our duty, but that we may avoid misconstruction, and hide pride from our eyes; for when there is a desire that men should take notice of our prayers, God takes no notice of them, unless it be to abhor and reject them. But if you be so circumstanced, that you cannot pray without being observed, you cannot help it; for it is better to hazard the censure of others, than the neglect of prayer. Only take care there be no ostentation in the doing of it.

III. Pray with holy awe and reverence of God, before whom you place yourselves. Labour for as much devotion and seriousness in prayer, as if you were taken up and presented before God on his royal throne, with millions of glorious angels ministering to him; or, as if you saw death and the grave on the one hand, and heaven and hell on the other; or, as if you heard the saints singing in heaven, or the damned roaring in hell. Do you not believe these things as well as if you saw them? and why are you not as serious as if you did see them?

IV. Study to pray in faith, eyeing the power, mercy, and promise of God, and relying upon the mediation and righteousness of Jesus Christ; for those who pray thus, shall not seek God in vain. This kind of prayer is like Jonathan's bow, 2 Sam. i. "that never returns empty."

V. Pray with fervency and importunity: Why? for ought you know, this may be the last Sabbath you may see, the last sermon that you may hear, and the last prayer you may put up. Pray therefore as a dying man would and should do. Remember how fervent you have seen some dying persons in prayer, and labour for the same frame and fervency. You should seek this day, to have such a feeling of spiritual wants, and to have your bowels so pinched with a sense thereof, that, like the hungry and almost starved beggars, you may cry aloud for the bread of life. Let your prayers be the travail of your souls, and not the labour of your lips. Let your hearts be suitably affected in all the parts of prayer; never leave confession without some sorrow for sin, nor petition without some sense of the worth

of mercies, nor thanksgiving without some solace and joy in God, the Author and Fountain of all our happiness. Let your affections correspond with your expressions, and continue instant in prayer. You ought this day, like Sampson, Judg. xvi. to "bow yourselves with all your might" in prayer, to pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple, and the strong holds of sin in your souls. "Lift up your hearts with your hands to God in the heavens, and stir up yourselves to take hold of him:" Cast yourselves down at his feet, and say. as once a great man did to his prince, "I am resolved never to rise till I obtain mercy."

VI Use arguments with God in prayer, either taken from God's power and mercy, or from your misery and necessity. Dost thou doubt, O man, if thou be converted? then lie sobbing before God, like that leper, Mat. viii. "Lord. if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" *q. d.* Lord, thou mayest do as thou wilt, but this I know, though thou should never help me, that thou canst do it. Thou hast power enough, yea, it is easy for thee, and will be no manner of trouble to thee, to change my heart, and give me an alms of mercy. Thou hast mercy as well as power; I have heard a good report of thy mercy, that "the King of Israel is a merciful King, and delights not in the death of a sinner," and that "his mercy endures forever." Lord, here a poor condemned rebel comes in upon the proclamation, to accept of the King of heaven's indemnity: I lay myself at thy feet, content to accept of mercy upon any terms: "Hast thou not one blessing for me, even for poor me, O my Father?" If there be not enough of merit in Christ to save me, I do not seek salvation; but in him I know there is a fulness of redundancy, a treasure that cannot be emptied. And Lord, art thou not willing as well as able? Hast thou not opened. thy side, that I might look in and see the yearning of thy bowels? yea, I have heard them many times sounding towards lost sinners: Why then should I go dwell with everlasting burning? "What profit, Lord, is there in my blood? The dead cannot praise thee, they that go down to the pit cannot celebrate thy goodness." Is it not better to make me a friend, than let me be an enemy? Is it not better that I should eternally sing. thy praise, than live forever blaspheming thy name? "Lord, what shall I do to be saved? Is there no

balm in Gilead for a wounded soul?" Is there no hope for a distressed sinner? Is there no city of refuge for a pursued criminal? "Lord, I am come like a starving beggar to the last door for relief, if thou help me not I must perish at thy threshold, I can go no further." Could we believingly make use of such argument as these, Christ's pitying heart would burst out in midst thereof, and say to us as to the woman of Canaan, Matt. xv. "O woman, great is thy faith, be it to thee even as thou wilt."

VII. As on Sabbath morning we should address God with more solemnity and intenseness, and with greater length than ordinary; so also with special petitions for the day. 1. Pray for yourselves, that God may give you hearts and frames to sanctify a Sabbath to the Lord; that he may prepare your hearts for hearing, strengthen and sanctify your memories, go along with you to the sanctuary, and allow you his presence there. Before you enter upon the public work of this day, labour to get your hearts possessed effectually with these truths: That God must work his own work in you and for you, or it will never be done; and without him you can do nothing: That there is no healing virtue in the waters of the sanctuary, unless the Angel of his presence descend and move them: That as in the first creation the Spirit moved on the waters, and then the living creatures were formed; so the Spirit must move upon the waters of ordinances, before they can produce or increase spiritual life: and as he must move upon the ordinances, and give virtue to them, so he must move upon your souls in attending on them. Pray earnestly then, that God may give you his Spirit to prepare you for reading his word, and to assist you in hearing; and, particularly, that he may give you attention to hearken, understanding to conceive, wisdom to apply, judgment to discern, faith to believe, memory to retain, and grace to practice what you shall hear; that so the word may prove unto you "the saviour of life unto life," and not "the saviour of death unto death." O pray fervently, that it may not be your condemnation to go to the sanctuary every new Sabbath to get new bands laid upon you, to get your hearts more hardened, your affections more deadened, and your souls slain by the words of God's mouth; but that the word may be attended with saving power, for your conviction of

sin, and your conversion to God in Jesus Christ the Mediator. Be so intent for Christ's presence this day, that no Lord's day may satisfy you without the Lord of the day. O what is the best day that ever was without the Ancient of days? What are the ordinances of God, without the God of ordinances? What are the assemblies of saints, without the Master of assemblies? What is a sermon, without a Saviour? What is a communion table, without communion with God? What is a Sabbath day, without the Lord of the Sabbath? Protest therefore in a humble but an importunate manner, that you will be satisfied with nothing this day, without his presence; say with Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 5. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." And cry to him with the church, Isa. lxiv. 1. "O that thou wouldst this day rend the heavens! O that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow at thy presence."

2. Pray for him that dispenseth the word, that God may open to him both a door of utterance, and a door of entrance; and particularly, that God may direct him to speak something that may be suitable to your case. It is a great loss to yourselves, as well as to ministers, that you pray so little for them: What is the reason that many times ministers are straitened in delivery, do not reach your hearts, nor speak closely to your case? it is because you pray not for them. Mind that sad threatening, Ezek. iii. 26. where the Spirit saith to the prophet, "I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house." O pray against this sad judgment, and beg that God may loose the minister's tongue, and put a word in his mouth for you. Can you expect a blessing on your food, when you will not so much as seek it from God, by praying for him that is to break the bread of life to you?

3. Pray for the whole congregation, that the Sabbath may be a day of the Son of man, and a day of God's power unto them: Pray that Christ may mount the white horse of the gospel, gird his sword on his thigh, and ride in triumph among them; that the arrows of his word may be sharp, and pierce hearts. Beg that some may be convinced, others strengthened, and others comforted: Pray that God's word preached, may not only be as a lively song to the hearers, as

Ezek. xxxiii. but as a living song to them, that many may have it to say as David, Psal. cxix. 50 "Thy word hath quickened me." Pray that God may this day make his word as a "sharp two-edged sword," to divide betwixt sinners and their sins: that he may cause its point prick their hearts and savingly wound their consciences, and make its edge fetch blood from their lusts, yea hew them in pieces like Agag, before the Lord. Pray that God may make his word both as a fire and a hammer to the congregation; a fire to burn up the stubble of their corruptions, and a hammer to break the rocks of their hearts into pieces. Pray that it may be as the key of David, both to open and shut many hearts on this day; a key to open hearts, so as they may never more be shut upon Christ when he stands and knocks at them; and a key to shut hearts so that they may never open to sin when it knocks for entrance. Pray that the whole congregation may get grace to hear sermons, and put up prayers this day, as if they were the last that ever they were to hear or put up in this world: and that Zion's King may take to himself his glorious conquering power, and in his majesty ride prosperously; and that he may make the arrows of his word "sharp in the hearts of his enemies, so that the people may fall under him."

IX. You must take care, that your secret prayers on Sabbath morning be early and seasonable, that they interfere not with family worship, which ought this morning to be timely performed before the public worship begin; for one duty must not justle with another, every duty is beautiful in its season. And in family prayer you must be more solemn and particular than at other occasions; our sacrifices this day ought to be doubled. O it were happy, if secret and family duties were our souls' delight on this day; and if we had such spiritual skill to perform them, that they might be helps, not hindrances, to public ordinances.

Lastly. Having this morning put up your fervent prayers to God, you ought to look and wait for a return of them through the day. A wise merchant, that sends a ship to sea, will inquire after her. Prayer brings your food from afar, look what becomes of it. If you present a petition to a prince you wait what answer will be returned; and are ye not much more concerned in this case to do it? If you look not after your prayers, it is a sign you have little sense

of your needs; little sense of the burden and yoke of sin; little sense of the preciousness of Christ, or excellency of these mercies you have been seeking. You ought this day to be able to say, as Psal. xxv. 5, "On thee do I wait all the day." Your souls should be still panting after God and the light of his countenance, saying, "O that I may this day behold the beauty of the Lord! O that I may see his power and glory! O that I may taste that he is good! O that I may hear his voice, may bear his image, may be brought into the chamber of presence, and see him through the lattice of ordinances.

If ye would have a gracious return this day you must, be looking above ordinances and duties to him, who is "the dew of Israel," and expect the heavenly rain from himself; otherwise your fleece will remain dry, for all that men or angels can do. Therefore plead with God that he will bless and concur with the means, and "breathe upon your dry bones," without which the breath of men can never make them alive.

III. *Of Self-searching.*

As to the duty of self-searching, it is very necessary on the Sabbath morning, in order to prepare your souls for the work of the day.

I. Inquire into your own state; try whether you be in nature or grace, that, when you hear the word, you may know what belongs to you: For, if you be ignorant of your condition, you may apply promises for threatenings; conclude for heaven, when you are heirs of wrath; persuade yourselves of the love of God, when you are in a state of enmity.

II. Inquire into your particular necessities; what are these wants you would have supplied by the word, these sins and lusts you would have slain by it, what are these weak graces you would have strengthened by it, what are these doubts you would have resolved by it, and these heart-plagues you would have cured?

III. Inquire into the frames of your hearts, and see if they be duly qualified and disposed for attending the public ordinances.

Quest. What sort of hearts ought we to bring with us?

Ans. 1. Bring humble hearts. Consider that you are pieces of mean and vile dust venturing into the presence of an infinitely glorious God, to hear the "voice of the Lord, that is full of majesty," and solemnly to converse with him, before whom the "angels veil their faces."

2. Bring soft hearts, that the word may make some impression on them; for an arrow shot against a stone sticks not, but falls to the ground. Labour to get the "fallow ground of your hearts ploughed up, and broken," before you come to receive the "seed of the word," according to Hosea x. 12. If you would have the fallow ground ploughed up, you must seek the Lord by fervent and heart-breaking prayer.

3. Bring hunger and thirst with you to God's banquetting-house; bring a deep sense of soul wants and necessities, and longing desires to meet with Christ in the ordinances: for he "fills the hungry with good things, when the rich are sent away empty." O for the hungry appetites of God's children, when we come to God's house! Say, "O that, like a new-born child, I may this day desire the sincere milk of the word for my nourishment! and, O that, like a true child of my heavenly Father, I may love that milk best which comes warm from the breasts of public ordinances!"

IV. Search into these lusts and evils that hinder the success of ordinances; cast them out, and guard carefully against them. If you would have God this day to hear your prayers, and accept of your sacrifices, you must "regard no iniquity in your hearts," you must throw out all bosom lusts and idols. Christ saith to you this day, as once he did to Judas in another case, John xviii. 8. "If therefore you seek me, let these go their way:" Let your pride, worldliness, prejudice, &c. go away; for they bar Christ out of the heart.

1. Throw out worldliness, and all thoughts about the world, that you may with your whole souls this day attend upon God: Say to the cares of the world, as Abraham to his servants, Gen. xxii. "Stay ye here till I go yonder to worship God." Suffer not a vain thought this day to take up its lodging in your heart, according to Jer. iv. 14. It is said of Bernard, that, when he came to the church door, he would say, "Stay here, all my earthly thoughts." Nay.

say this also before you come from home. Worldly hearts will hinder you from getting good of the ordinances: they will make the church like the market-place to you, full of tumult and distraction: they will make such a noise and buzzing in your ears, that you cannot hear, or they will make you wander in time of hearing, as those, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Nay, they will make you weary of all Sabbath work, as those, Amos viii. 5.

2. Lay aside self-conceit, or a good opinion of yourselves, your duties and performances: count all these but "dung and loss for the saving knowledge of Christ." For, if you lean upon your prayers and preparations this day as any piece of righteousness before God, this will mar your access to God this day, and make the ordinances prove dry breasts to you.

3. Throw out all prejudices against ministers, and against the laws of Christ: and with meekness lay your ear and heart open to receive instruction, saying with Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

4. Guard against doubtings concerning the truths of God and mysteries of religion: Let us captivate and subject reason to faith, and deal with it, as Joshua did with the Gibeonites; he made them "hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the service of the temple:" so let us make reason subject to faith, and serviceable to religion; but nowise set it up as a standard for examining its mysteries by, since they are above its reach.

5. Beware of erroneous principles; for these will mar the good of ordinances to you: while there is an error in the foundation, you cannot be "built up in the most holy faith." Christ bids us, "be wise as serpents:" and serpents (they say) whatever injury is offered to them, their great care is to preserve their head. Let it be our great care, then, not only to preserve our hearts and hands from sin, but our heads from error: especially when there are so many false teachers going abroad, seeking to "pervert the simple, by fair words and false speeches."

6. Beware likewise of the schism and division, and guard against those who are instruments to divide and scatter Christ's sheep. Do not straggle from Christ's flock, but

abide close by the place where the good Shepherd feeds his flock, "and makes them rest at noon," and do not "turn aside after the flocks of the companions," Cant. i. 7.

I refer the handling of the duties of masters of families, as such, till afterwards: only, it ought to be their care early to call their families together to pray with them, and praise God; and to cause them rise as early this day as others. Let not your servants and children waste away this morning in sleep and idleness, but call them up as early to God's work this day, as you do to your own upon other days.

How blame-worthy are these families, and especially the masters thereof, who on week days can rise betimes to follow their worldly business, but on the Lord's day do lie longer in bed than ordinary, giving themselves to carnal ease and rest? Is this to keep holy the Sabbath-day, thus to sleep and loiter away the first, and chiefest part thereof? Is this the way to accomplish the work of the Sabbath, to promote the glory of God, and carry on the work of your salvation? All of you have great work to do this day; therefore rise early to it, as the Israelites did to the besieging of Jericho: They had been encompassing the city six days before; but we are told, Joshua vi. 15. that "on the seventh day, they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city seven times:" and so that day they became masters of the city. And, according to the best expositors, this seventh day, on which the walls of Jericho fell down, was the Sabbath. Now, O Christian, as the Israelites had the strong walls of Jericho, so hast thou the strong holds of sin to batter down this day; thou hast these Canaanites to conquer, which would keep thee out of the promised land: therefore imitate the Israelites, and rise early this morning to your work. The walls are thick, your enemies strong: if you would expect then to conquer on the Sabbath day, and triumph against night, see that you begin the siege early.

And, if you would manage the work successfully, you must set about and carry it on conjunctly, as well as separately by family-prayer, as well as secret prayer: and see that all in the family attend family-worship this morning. Likewise, as occasion offers, exhort your children and servants to prepare themselves for the public worship by the performances of secret duties, particularly reading

and prayer. When you are at meat this morning, shew by your holy speeches, that your minds are not forgetful of the work of the day. Check playing and idle talking, both in children and servants, and labour to engage them by your example, to shew a more grave and serious air in their countenances this morning, than upon other occasions.

Let as many of them as can be conveniently spared, accompany you to the public ordinances: and suffer none of them to be absent therefrom, except in cases of necessity. Remember the fourth command, "Thou, thy son, thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and all within thy gates." Let not the dressing of meat for you, keep servants from the house of God this day; but see that you be able to say with Cornelius, (who feared the Lord with all his house) "We are all here present before God." Though children be young, yet bring them with you; for they are capable of getting good by the word sooner than we are aware. The scripture takes several times notice of little ones in the solemn assemblies, Deut. xxix 11. Ezra x. 1. Acts xxi. 5. If we lay our children by the pool-side, who knows how early the Spirit of God may help them in, and heal them? Take your families along with you to the church; leave them not behind you, to come straggling to the church after worship is begun; nor allow them to drop away before it be ended. This is very indecent and disorderly; you would not allow them to do so with respect to your work. If you were going to the harvest field, you would not suffer them to come or go when they pleased. No, you would oblige them all to be ready timely to come forth together, and fall to their work at once, and tarry till they loosed from work together. And should you not be as much concerned for God's work, as for your own; for the business of eternity, as for the affairs of time?

Concerning our going to the Church.

In the next place, let me give some advice relating to your behaviour in going to the church, proper especially for you whose houses lie some what remote from it.

Having dressed your souls, as well as may be, this morning, according to the foresaid direction, go forth, watching over your hearts and senses, having the lively impression of

God's eyes upon you, and believing that he takes special notice of all your thoughts, words, and actions this day.

If you walk in company with others, take heed to your words, that they may be savoury and suitable. O that people would guard against worldly discourse in their going to the church (which very much discomposeth the heart for the public worship) and would talk of spiritual subjects, of the design and work of the day, and encourage one another to it! How pleasant would this be! This was the ancient practice of God's people, Zech. viii. 21 and we see how much David is taken with it, Psal. cxxii. 1. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord;" *q. d.* It was the most pleasant sound I heard all the week through, to hear the people encouraging one another to assemble to God's public worship, in God's house, upon God's day. This to him was the most pleasant journey ever he went; he was not backward to it, he did not weary of it; nay, it was "the joy and life of his soul;" he was glad of it. How few among us are in this frame? Alas! instead of it there are many in our day glad of any trifling excuse to stay them at home, or take them away from the afternoon's sermon.

If you live at some distance from the church, and be with carnal company by the way who savour nothing but the world: it is best for thee to retire from them to thine own meditations, lest thou be infected with their carnal and corrupt communications: for even a Peter, when he is conversing and warming his hands with the enemies of Christ, his heart turns ice cold and frozen to Christ his Master, till a love-blink from the Sun of righteousness thawed it again.

If better meditation offer not to the by the way, I shall furnish thee with some very suitable, from natural things, which are objects of your senses.

If it be in a winter morning thou goest out, when the sun is but rising, think, if one sun make so bright a morning, what a shining morning will that be when Christ, with all his bright angels and saints, shall break through the clouds, when there shall be as many suns as we see stars in a winter's night? O! shall I be one of those that "shall shine as the sun, in the kingdom of my Father?"

If it be in the spring time, and when a pleasant rain is

falling upon the grass and corn, think, the Sabbath should be a growth-day for believers. This day God is as the "dew to Israel." O that my soul "may grow as the lilly, and revive as the corn!" O that I may grow inward in sincerity, and outward in good works: downward in humility, and upward in heavenly mindedness! Let the doctrine of God's word this day drop on my soul, as "the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass," that I may wax taller in grace, and stronger in faith and love. This day I should be "going from strength to strength," according to Psal. lxxxiv. 7. As the bee is busy in going from flower to flower, still gathering honey as she passeth; so should I this day go from duty to duty, from one ordinance to another, from praying to reading, from reading to hearing, from hearing to meditating, still gathering grace and strength as I go.

Dost thou look to the heavens? Think, I have my Saviour and my all there; there is the place of my everlasting abode. Sense tells me what the outside of it is; yet that spangled roof over my head is but the pavement of that glorious place, where I shall enjoy my eternal Sabbath, and my everlasting rest in Christ's bosom. O my soul, yonder is Goshen, the region of light; yon twinkling stars, shining moon, and flaming sun, are but as lanterns hanging out at my Father's house to light thee, while thou walkest in the dark streets of the earth. Little dost thou know the glory, mirth, and joy, that are within: O what are worldlings' joys to them! O let my affections and desires this day mount thither, that this may be one of the days of heaven to my soul!

Again, think, the Lord hath spread out the "heaven as a curtain," Psal. civ. 2. and, notwithstanding of its rapid motion, this curtain hath continued spread near these six thousand years, and not one hole is to be seen in it to this day. Is not heaven then a safe place for me to lay up my treasure in, where none can break through and steal it from me? O that my portion and treasure may be there; "that where my treasure is, there my heart may be also!"

Dost thou see the clouds? Think on the day when Christ will rend and break through them; as he went up triumphing in a cloud to heaven, in like manner he shall come again. Are the heavens of such bright and pure mat-

ter? Think on the purity of the inhabitants thereof. There is no room, no not a foot-breadth, for impure persons in the heavenly Jerusalem, where the gates are of pearl; no profane sinner, no unclean thing shall enter there.

When thou walkest on the ground, think, this whole earth is but my Father's footstool, that he hath given me to tread on: O how glorious then must his palace be! yet it is mine in Christ. Again, this earth "hangs upon nothing," Job xxvi. 27. O shall I be so foolish as to hang my hopes upon that which hangs on nothing? Again, wonder at God's power and faithfulness, that notwithstanding it hangs as a ball in the air, and hath had many dreadful tempests upon it, and terrible earthquakes within it, yet God hath kept it from moving out of its place for near these six thousand years past.

Dost thou tread upon the grass? Think how God calls thee thereby to remember thy fading life and withering condition, every step thou makest, Isa. xl. 6. "All flesh is grass," and death is coming with his scythe to mow down this grass: And, though some grass escape the scythe in summer, when it is fresh and green, yet the winter frost will wither it away; so, though you escape the scythe of death in the summer of your youth, yet the winter of old age will come and wither you.

Dost thou pass over a little brook or rivulet in the way? Think, O if I could say this day with the psalmist, Psal. xlii. 1. 2. "As the hart pants after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?"

Dost thou go up an ascent? Think, the way to heaven is all up hill, Psal. xxiv. Lord strengthen me to climb it, without fainting or sliding back. O that my soul this day may be ascending to God, and God may be descending to me!

Dost thou behold the sea? Wonder at the ebbing and flowing of it, and at God's power and goodness, that sets restraining bounds to it. How easily might that power, that makes it to flow 20 feet, make it to flow 200 feet? and so it would overflow our sea-towns and adjacent coasts; but the Lord's goodness commands it back again by its ebb.

Dost thou see a ship in the sea? Think, Christ's church is compared to a ship; this world is the sea, through which she sails; believers are the passengers; God is her pilot; the angels are her rowers; faith is the helm; hope is the anchor: for a mast, she hath, in the midst of her, erected the saving tree of the cross; the graces are the sails hanging thereon; the Spirit is the wind that fills them; but Christ alone is the bottom that carries all safe and sure to the haven of eternal rest and felicity. O let my soul lean upon no other bottom. Again, think how mercifully Christ delivered his disciples, when tossed in a ship, on the sea in a dark night. My soul is a little ship, often ready to be overwhelmed with the waves of temptations: O then, when it is in this danger, let me awake Christ by my prayers. Again, as it is said of the mariner, with respect to his ship, that he sails always within four inches of death; so it may be said of the soul in relation to the body, that it lives still within four inches of eternity. If these earthen vessels break, then our souls are immediately set a-drift into the bankless and bottomless ocean of eternity. Lord, let not my soul launch out into that deep, while I am uncertain whether it sink or swim.

Doth it rain upon thee while the sun is shining? Think, if the sun of God's countenance shine on me, I may well be content to be wet with some rain of affliction: this easily doth counterbalance any trouble whatsoever.

Art thou drawing near to the church? Then put up some fervent ejaculations and prayers for God's blessing and presence. Say, as Abraham's servent did, when he came to the well of water near the city. Gen. xxiv. 12. "O Lord God, I pray thee send me good speed this day." "Let me not miss my errand; let it be the day when salvation shall come to my heart and house; let it be the day of my new birth, the day when my hard heart will be broken; let it be a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. As I am drawing nigh to thy house, Lord, draw nigh to my soul, and let me have a meeting with thee this day. As thou art to knock at the doors of my soul by the hammer of thy word this day, Lord, come and make patent doors for thyself, and command thy loving kindness to break in. Lord, open my eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy law; open my ears, that I may hear the charming voice of the

Son of God; open my heart, that the King of glory may enter in;—and open my lips, that my mouth may shew forth thy praise."

Dost thou come within sight of the church? Let thy heart rejoice to see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, and pray that God may still "create a cloud of defence upon every dwelling place in mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies;" and that "the mountain of the Lord's house may be exalted above all mountains." We ought to be much concerned for the church, and "prefer Jerusalem above our chief joy." Let us do, in a spiritual way, what Simon Maccabæus did in a natural, who, with three years labour, took down the top of the mount Acta at Jerusalem, that no hill there might compete in height with the temple of God: so let us cause the greatest mountain of secular interest veil to the mountain of the house of the Lord.

Do you see a poor man begging by the way? Let it awaken your gratitude and thankfulness, that you are not in his case, and he in yours; and that you are not begging from him, instead of his begging from you.—Hearken, how importunate some beggars are; with what warm and feeling expressions do they plead? they uncover their sores, and shew their maladies, and use all methods to move our compassions; when we think to put them off with excuses or refusals, yet they follow us, and by their importunity draw an alms from us: then think with yourselves, O why do not I thus with God? why am I so careless in seeking an alms of mercy from him? is not my need greater than any beggar's? is not the alms I am seeking far better? is not the fulness and pity of the Giver infinitely more? and shall I be so formal and lifeless in prayer? It was a good counsel of one, that bade people learn to pray of beggars.

As it is one of the duties of this day to make collections, and bestow alms for the relief of the poor; so you should take heed that you perform this duty in the right manner; that you do it not for the praise of men, but for the glory of God. Pray that your alms may be perfumed by the incense of Christ's merits, that they may be a "sweet-smelling sacrifice unto God." Would you have a bountiful alms from God this day? then give liberally to his poor. Remember Christ's eye is upon you, and noticeth from heaven what every one casts into his poor this day, as well as he

noticed the poor widow's casting in her two mites into the treasury, when he was here upon earth. Though you have not much to yourself, yet you are bound to give somewhat; and, if it be given in sincerity, God will graciously accept of it. though it be but two mites. But sure this will never break you, nor waste your substance, but rather increase it, and obtain a blessing thereon. I pity those miserable persons who want not money to tipple and drink with, but yet have none to bestow upon God's poor.

Directions concerning the Public Worship.

I proceed to the second thing proposed, What is necessary to be done in time of public worship, and when we enter into the church.

I. "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God," Eccl. v *i. e* Look to your affections, which are the feet of the soul, by which men go to God. and walk or converse with him. Firmly believe, and constantly remember, that God's eye is very much on your behaviour while you are in his house. Therefore in the tabernacle, which was the place of public worship, it was commanded, Exod. xxv. 37. "Thou shalt make seven lamps. and they shall light the lamps that they may give light:" to teach us, that nothing there could escape God's sight; for in his house there was always light. You cannot sin in secret there, for there are seven lamps to discover your miscarriages in the Lord's house. And. when the temple succeeded the tabernacle, God says of it. 1 Kings ix. 3. "Mine eye shall be there perpetually" God hath an eye, 1. of observation, Jer. xvi. 17. to notice with what sincerity and liveliness you offer your services and performances. 2. An eye of goodwill. Amos ix. 4. to approve and bless you, if you worship him sincerely and faithfully. 3. An eye of indignation, Jer. xxi. 10 to bring wrath on you, if you approach God irreverently, worship him carelessly, and profane his day. Now, you may be assured of it, that God is as jealous of his courts under the gospel. as he was under the law, and doth take special notice of his people's behaviour there; for he tells us, "Where two or three are gathered in his name, he is in the midst of them," Matth. xviii. 20.

As you ought to have a lively sense of God's omniscience when you enter God's house, so you ought to have awful impressions of God's greatness, into whose presence you come, and a deep sense of your vileness and unworthiness to appear before him: And therefore be putting up ejaculations to God for acceptance in Christ Jesus. I do not mean that you should stand up (as some do) to private prayer in a public way, as the Pharisees did of old in the synagogues, to be seen of men, for which our Saviour reproves them Matth. vi. 5, 6. telling us, that secret prayer should be performed in a secret manner: and far less should this be practised (as some do) when the congregation is employed in other worship, for this were a confounding of worship, and unacceptable to him who is the God of order, and is plainly reproved by the apostle; 1 Cor. xiv. Alas! it is to be suspected of many that do so, that these are all the prayers they use on the Sabbath morning, for preparing themselves or their families for the public worship. But, if you come in before worship be begun, it is very proper you have your private ejaculations, and be lifting up your thoughts to heaven in a private manner; and, when you are set down in your seats, see if you be able to give a satisfying answer to that question the Lord put to the prophet, 1 Kings xix. 13. "What dost thou here, Elijah?" Can you say, "Lord, I have come at thy command, to the place where thy honour dwelleth, to the place where thou usest to meet with thy people, that I might meet with thee, and get a glimpse of thy countenance?" Alas! it is much to be regretted, that many come to church, they cannot tell for what end, like those Ephesians, mentioned Acts xix. 32. "The more part knew not wherefore they were come together." They come for nothing, and they, ordinarily go away with nothing.

But as for you, whose errand is to meet with God, and get quickening to your souls, look to the frame of your hearts, set yourselves to hear God's word, and join in his worship with great reverence and fear; consider, not only ministers (God's ambassadors) are present, but the glorious angels are present, nay the God of angels himself is present; therefore say, as Jacob did of Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 16, 17. "Surely the Lord is in this place. How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and

the gate of heaven." In every part of God's worship, this day, whether singing, praying, hearing, partaking, study to behave as one that believes he is seated in the presence of the all-seeing God, as one that is working for his immortal soul, as one that, within a few days, shall enter the gates of death, and render an account at the bar of the great Judge of the world.

II. Study to be at the beginning of worship, that you may be able to say with Cornelius, Acts x. 33. "Now we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Think not that you are in time if you win to the lecture or sermon, though you miss the prayers that went before; for, if you sinfully miss these, you have no ground to expect good by the whole day's preaching, since it is by the means of the public prayers that the word is sanctified to you, and you are prepared for it; and what good can that word do you, if God bless it not to you? and how can you look for the blessing, if you come not to seek it? It is not the way to profit by one ordinance, to neglect another. To be late of coming is offensive to God, stumbling to serious Christians, and injurious to your own souls. Alas! upon what small and frivolous excuses do many stay back from the public worship, or linger in coming to it? A little business, a little rain, snow, or cold, will detain them from the means of salvation. You that cannot hear the word, or come in time to God's worship for a little cold now, consider what an alteration there will be in hell; there it will be hot enough, and you shall not have liberty of hearing. Did the cold hinder you? There the heat shall punish you for it. Doth a little rain or snow keep you at home, when Christ is calling you to receive him? How then will you endure that horrible tempest, which he will rain on gospel slighters, even as a flood of kindled brimstone that will never cease nor quench.

III. When you first see the minister this day in the pulpit, think, "O how welcome should I make him that bringeth glad tidings, even the news of reconciliation to a perishing world? Lord, how great is thy clemency to us this day, in sending thy ambassadors with an olive branch of peace, and not a trumpet of war in their mouths! Consider our reiterated rebellions and provocations, it might have been expected we should have had a fearful message sent us,

like that of the flying angel, Rev viii. *ult.* "Wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth," &c. But, instead of this, we have the sweet message in Isa. lv 1. renewed, "Ho, every one that thirstest, come to the waters, and he that hath no money, come, buy," &c and that in ver. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him," &c. That is a joyful sound. "How then shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

IV. Study to be devout and reverend in the public worship, both as to the frame of your mind, and gesture of your body. It was a good advice of one, for this end:—"Fix your eye on the minister, your ear on the word, and your heart on God." Awe your hearts into a holy reverence, by viewing the holiness and power of that God whom ye worship, and revolving his titles of majesty; so did the psalmist, Psal. lxxxix. 6, 7. 8. "Who in heaven can be compared to the Lord? &c. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, &c. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee! &c." Make a covenant with your eyes, that they gaze not about in spying your neighbours' clothes and gesture. A gadding eye is the ready way to make a wandering heart. The devil hath many objects to tempt and divert us; first men let loose their eyes, and then away goes the heart. Make a covenant with your eyes this day, that they neither shut with sleep, nor wander after vanity. Though bodily service without the heart profiteth little, yet the worship of our bodies is not to be wholly slighted; God hath a right to the adoration of our bodies as well as our souls, for Christ suffered for both, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And we find Christ and the saints in the scripture using reverent gesture in prayer. I dare not precisely restrict people to any one particular gesture in public prayer, neither desire I to lay more stress upon gestures than they will bear, since I know communion with God may be obtained in any gesture; yet I must own, that it is the unhappy effect of our contention about gestures, that some serious persons, who have a devout respect to God and holy things, do yet seem more irreverent in their outward carriage, than some who are strangers to the power of godliness, and immoral in their conversations. I know these place all their religion in outward gestures and forms, and

go no further; yet this warrants none to run to the other extreme, to despise a decent or devout gesture. If weakness of nature require a person to sit in time of public prayer, I do not quarrel it, but, when no just cause can be pleaded for it, I cannot say that it is a suitable praying posture at public worship. A lazy sluggish posture in prayer tends to bring on sleep and drowsiness, and makes us forget what we are about; whereas, when we stand up and universally change our posture when public prayer begins, it helps to awaken people to think upon the solemn addresses they are making to the great God. Only let us take care, that there be no vanity, self-conceit, or affectation, in the postures of our bodies at worship.

V. Come to hear the word with a sincere purpose to obey it, and comply with the whole will of God without reserve, be it pleasant or harsh to nature; be ready to perform every known duty, and part with every known sin, be it as dear as your right hand, or right eye. It is not enough to say, We are all present to hear the sermon; but you must say with Cornelius and his company, Acts x. "We are present to hear all things commanded us of God." And in a special manner you must be ready to hear and obey his "great command, of believing on the name of his Son," which is the great end of preaching and hearing. Wherefore, when Christ knocks by his word at the door of your heart, be ready to open, and welcome him in with joy; say to him, as Laban to Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 31. "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?" Though alas! I cannot say what follows, "I have prepared the house," yet, Lord come in and prepare it for thyself: And though "I be unworthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," yet a word from thee can cleanse and repair the house, yea, and "prepare an upper room" for thyself; "Lord speak the word, and it shall be done."

VI. Give close attention to the word. God looses you this day from the world, that you may "attend on the Lord without distraction," 1 Cor. vii. 35. Attend this day to what your Lord saith to you, as men who believe that every Sabbath and every sermon, that every prayer and exhortation, every call and offer of grace bring you a step nearer heaven, or nearer hell; nearer to the mansions with Christ,

or to a dwelling with devils ; and that endless eternity depends upon your attention to God's word. How attentively would a condemned rebel hearken to his prince, every word being either life or death to him ! Consider, it is a matter of life and death to you, yea, your life through all the ages of never ending eternity ; your life depends on right hearing, Deut. xxxii. 47. And will you not take heed ? You would have God attentive to your words in the time of your distress, and will you not be attentive to his words in the time of your health ? Could a minister tell you how you might acquire a good estate, or where you might find a rich treasure, you would hearken to that ; but, for an inheritance or treasure in heaven, many think it not worth their while to notice : Is not this an argument of strong carnality and atheism ? O if we could imitate Christ's hearers, Luke xix. 48 it is said, " They were all very attentive to hear him ;" the word *attentive* according to the original, may be rendered, *They hanged on him*, or *They hanged their ears at Christ's lips !* Let us in like manner, hang upon Christ in hearing of the word, even as the child doth upon the breast, or as the bee upon the flower.

There is nothing that Satan aims at more, than to divert your attention in time of hearing the word. This enemy of your souls is busy every day laying snares for you, seeking your ruin : But, O how active is he every Lord's day : the devil is still first at church ; the children of God never gather together, but Satan is among them ; and his great design is, to render this engine of the word fruitless, because by it the strong holds of his kingdom have been battered and broken down. Now, the way he finds most success is, by tempting our eyes and thoughts to wander, in order to keep us from being attentive in time of hearing. O then, if we would have the word to profit us, let us watch against Satan's temptations and suggestions ; let us guard against wandering, wearying, drowsiness, or any thing that may hinder our attention. And for those that can write quickly, to write down the heads of the sermon in time of hearing, is by some reckoned a good mean to engage the attention, prevent drowsiness and help the memory afterwards ; and some have found it very refreshing and edifying a long time after, to be looking over what they had written. But especially it is proper for young people to learn and use this way of writing.

VII. In a special manner, take heed to the word that suits your case, and most concerns your soul; particularly to that word that discovers the sinfulness and vileness of a poor soul by nature; and to that word that points out the misery of the unbeliever, and that shows the weight of those curses, the terror of that wrath, and severity of divine justice, to which he is hourly exposed; and to that word that sets out sin in its black and bloody colours: to that word that shows your inability to help yourself out of your miserable state: to that word that discovers your need of Christ, and his excellency, fitness and suitableness for you; and to that word that comes close home to your conscience, and tells you, as Nathan did David, "Thou art the man," thou art the poor lost sinner that is condemned, and for ever undone, without Christ. Take heed to that word that points out your particular sins, your predominate lusts and idols; take with the charge, and cry out, *Unclean unclean.* While hearing the word, you ought to place your sins, and especially your darling lusts, in the front of the battle (as Uriah) purposely to be slain, and say, "Lord, let these smooth stones taken out of the brook of the sanctuary be thrown by so skilful and powerful a hand, that they may sink deep into the foreheads of these uncircumcised ones, to their utter ruin and destruction." And O it were happy, if, while the word doth touch our sins, our hearts were melted like Peter's, and moved to go home and weep bitterly. O what reason have we to weep, when we hear of the boundless mercy which we have despised, the matchless misery which we have deserved, the infinite love which we have abused, and the righteous law which we have transgressed!

VIII. Mix your hearing with faith, *i. e.* believe, 1. That it is God who speaks; the word is his, and not man's. 2. That he speaks to you in particular, as if he mentioned you by name and surname. Put not reproofs and threatenings by yourselves, and say, They belong to your neighbour, and not to you; for this is a dangerous stratagem of the devil against your souls. But let every man open his ear, and hear what the Spirit saith to him, and apply the word particularly to himself; for the best plaster that ever was made up, can do no good unless it be applied. 3. Believe that what the Lord speaks to you by his word, is true and

certain; that his doctrine is holy, and his laws just: that his threatenings will be strictly executed, and his promises faithfully accomplished. It is for want of faith that the word doth not profit. If but as much credit were given to the divine testimony and word of God, as we give to human testimony and the writings of men, the word would have more success and efficacy than, alas! it hath on the most part.

IX. Lay up what you hear in your hearts and memories, and be at all pains to retain it; for the devil like the fowls of the air, is at hand to snatch away the seed of the word as soon as it lights, if we be not careful to hide it in our hearts. Therefore it is a good help in time of hearing, to be often recalling and repeating the heads of what has been spoken, in our minds; for when we hear a head but once, and think no more upon it till the sermon be done, we are fair to lose it.

X. Join cordially with the congregation in singing the praises of God. This is a heavenly duty, pleasant to God, and profitable to yourselves, therefore be conscientious in the performing of it: "Sing with understanding," and meditate upon what you sing; "sing with grace in your hearts," Col. iii. 16. It is grace that sweetens the voice in God's ear; an old heart cannot sing a new song; nay, grace must be in a lively exercise when you sing, according to Psal. lvii. 8. you should cry to your hearts and to your graces, and particularly to faith, love and delight, as in Judges v. 12. "Awake, awake, Deborah, awake, awake, utter a song," &c. There should be a great warmness of love and affection to God when we sing to him, according to Isa. v. 1. Look well then to your hearts in singing, mind the matter more than the music, the cleanness of the heart more than the clearness of the voice.

Non vox sed votum; non musica chordula, sed cor; Non clamans, sed amans psallit in aure Dei.

I cannot pass some here, without a reproof, such as those, 1. Who sit dumb in the congregation, while their neighbours are praising God, as if the devil had tacked their tongues to the roof of their mouths: Think not this work below the greatest of you, for it is your honour. Excuse not yourselves by saying, you cannot sing musically; for,

if you had any delight in the duty, you would sing as you can. 2. Those who in singing, notice the tune more than the matter, and mind the voice more than the "making melody in their hearts to the Lord." 3. Those that absent themselves from the singing of the psalms, who either come not at the beginning of worship till the psalms be over, or rise and go out at the close before the psalms be sung. Would you know whose disciples they are who do so, they are not Christ's, but Judas's; for when Christ sang the hymn on the back of the communion, Matt. xxvi. 30. all the disciples were present but Judas, who slipt out before the psalms; and since he turned his back upon so sweet a duty, it could not be a good errand he was going about; it was first to betray his Master, and then to hang himself. O then, take warning, and follow Judas's example no more.

XI. Let none go forth before pronouncing of the blessing. God allows none, great or small, to go out before his worship be ended; both prince and people must meet and part at the same time, Ezek. xlvi. 10. Those that wilfully depart without hearing the blessing pronounced, and make a custom of it, if they repent not, it is to be feared they must one day stay to hear that sentence, "depart from me, ye cursed." You run away from the blessing, but you cannot run from this curse. Wherefore let us stay the blessing, and reverently stand up (as the congregation of Israel did, 1 Kings viii. 14.) to receive our share in it, hoping and praying that it may come down upon us, as it surely will, if we believingly look up to him, that "commands the blessing upon mount Zion, even life for evermore."

Concerning our behaviour betwixt Sermons.

Having finished the work of the forenoon, you must take care how you dispose of yourselves betwixt sermons.

1. If the intermission be somewhat long, and your houses near at hand, then retire to them, meditating upon what you have heard, and fixing the convictions and directions into your minds; beware of worldly thoughts or words by the way.

2. As soon as you come home, go to secret prayer, and beg God's help to improve what you have heard, that it may kill sin, and quicken grace in you; and that God may

strengthen your weak memories to retain it, and pardon your failings in his service.

3. Eat sparingly betwixt sermons, lest it dull your spirits, and indispose you for the afternoon's work; and see that your discourse in time thereof be suitable to the day.

4. If time allow, neglect not to call your family together for the worship of God.

5. If you have any time to be alone, spend it frugally in reading, praying, or meditating; let not a moment of it be lost. Either think on what you have been hearing, or draw spiritual instructions from what you see. Do you sit by the fire, and see the sparks fly up? think, "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," Job v. 7. "Sin hath filled my short life with troubles; but blessed be God, that I am this day invited to come to Jesus Christ, who is a remedy both for sin and sorrow."

Dost thou see a spider in the window weaving cunning webs to catch the silly fly? Think, "Satan, that cunning enemy, is doing the like for my poor soul."—Seest thou how the spider hides itself in its hole till once the fly be entangled, and then runs to seize it, and drag it into its hole? So doth the devil lie in wait till once sinners be caught into his snares, and then he lays on them, and hauls them away to hell with him. Again, think how painfully and curiously the spiders weave their cobwebs to catch flies, never considering, that before their prey be caught, both they and their webs may be swept down by the besom, and trode in the dust. What is this but a lively emblem of the curious projects which some frame of gaining the world? What are they else but a taking great pains to catch a fly?—And oft, before it be caught, death comes with its besom, and sweeps them and their fine projects down in the grave altogether; "for in that day all their thoughts perish," Psal. cxlvi. 4. But O how wise are those souls, who are laying out all their thoughts, and using all means this day to win Christ! This is a project that will survive death; here is gain that death cannot rob them of. Thus we see how every thing might learn us a spiritual lesson, if we were spiritually minded.

6. If you be far from home, and have not a house to which you can conveniently go betwixt sermons, then im-

prove your time as well as you can, either in the church or church-yard, by reading, meditating, private ejaculations, or spiritual conferences. It is very sad to hear people in the church-yard this day talking about their markets, corns, cattle, and other worldly subjects. Alas! the devil is as busy sowing his tares in the church-yard, as Christ's ministers are in sowing the good seed in the church, and hath far more increase than they. Is it not strange that people should go forth from hearing a warm sermon, yea a sermon exactly adapted to their soul's case, and yet have never a word of it among them, more than if they had been deaf or sleeping all the time; but no sooner is the word out of the minister's mouth, but presently the world is in theirs!

Quest. May not we ask or hear news on this day?

Ans. Asking, hearing, or telling news this day is sinful, if it be done to satisfy curiosity, to divert or put off the time; this would be a "finding our own pleasure," which is forbidden, on the Lord's day. But if it be done that we may know how it fares with the church at home or abroad, that we may get our hearts suitably affected with the case of Zion, as it was with Nehemiah, Neh. i. 2. "I asked them concerning the Jews, and concerning Jerusalem;" I say, in that case it is lawful; for thus we show our concern for the kingdom of Christ in the world, and hereby we may be furnished with matter both of prayer and praise. Outward events and occurrences, if rightly improved, will be so far from unframing the spirit for the duties of the Sabbath, that we may reap much spiritual advantage from them. Let us, therefore, take care to make a spiritual improvement of the news we hear this day; for God's power, mercy, and justice, may be seen and admired in the occurrences of providence, as well as in the works of creation. Dost thou hear any news that makes thee glad! let it excite thee to bless God for the sweet gospel news of "Christ's coming to save lost sinners;" which thou hast been hearing this day. Let it put thee in mind what glad tidings it will be to a believer to hear the sound of the last trumpet, and the absolving sentence of Christ his Judge. Dost thou hear of the raging contentions, divisions, and confusions, that are in the world? Let it mind thee of the best agreement and harmony that is among the saints and angels, above. Dost thou hear of bloody wars and rumours of wars? Remem-

ber the day is at hand, O believer, when thou shalt be housed with Christ the "Prince of peace," where there is nothing but perfect peace, union and tranquillity.

But, in case you walk or sit alone betwixt sermons, in the church or church-yard, you may either think upon what you have been hearing, or meditate upon your latter end, which the grave you see and tread on, loudly call you to. Think how "one generation comes, and another goes." Our fathers had their day upon the stage, and they are gone to make room for us; now we have our day upon the stage, but in a little we must go off also, and give place to the succeeding generation. As we draw on some upon the stage, these do thrust us off it again, and we must shortly be laid with our fathers. Again, think what a mortifying sight is before our eyes, there lies the rubbish of a thousand generations. What is the whole world almost, but a heap of graves and dead men's bones?—Much of the ground we now tread on, as well as these graves, was once living; so that we plough up and dig through our forefathers, and must shortly turn earth ourselves to bury our posterity. What cause have we then to be humble? We are made of the same materials with the ground we walk on: God's hands have kneaded our bodies of the same clay with others, and his fingers will crumble us again into the same dust. Let us abhor pride, for this piece of ground will lay us all low enough in a short time. As six feet of air doth contain us while we live, so six feet of earth here will suffice us when we are dead: and why should we boast of any earthly enjoyments? What is it we value ourselves upon? Is it our high extract? Ah! the worms have as noble an extract as we; nay, they are of an older family and rise, for "every creeping thing" was made before man, Gen. i. Do you value yourselves for your riches? remember both the poor and you shall lie down in the dust together, and the worms shall cover you alike, Job xxi 26. Nay, the body of a beggar makes as good dust as the body of a king: the grave-dust of the one smells as sweet as the other, there it makes no obeisance to it, nor keeps any distance from it.

Concerning the Afternoon's Worship.

When the time for the afternoon's worship is come, see that ye return again to it in due time; think not the half

of the day enough for the service of God; remember the whole day is his. Your soul's necessities also require your attending on all duties of worship; therefore miss no opportunity, for you know not when you may meet with Christ. Thomas, by being absent from one meeting of the disciples, lost a joyful sight of Christ, which the rest got, and for some time afterwards laboured under sad doubting and unbelief: so you that withdraw from any of the meetings of God's people in the sanctuary, have reason to fear plagues upon your souls. You that go away unnecessarily from the afternoon's worship (as many in the country do,) consider what a shrewd sight it is, that you have got little good in the forenoon, and that you are very indifferent what becomes of your precious souls. Know you not that the loss of one opportunity may be the loss of your souls? It may be, in your absence, the Spirit, who blows when he listeth, did vouchsafe a gale, which might have melted your frozen hearts; it may be, then the word was spoke, that through God's blessing, might have begun a good work on your soul. And when you provoke him, by neglecting such an opportunity, what do you know if ever he vouchsafe such another gale to you all your life again?

As for your carriage during the afternoon's worship, I refer you to the foregoing directions; for they suit the afternoon as well as the forenoon.

Only there are some few things more I would mind you of:

I. If there be sick persons who desire the aid of your prayers, as you ought to sympathize with them, so you ought also to remember God's goodness to you, that preserves you in health, when others are tossed on sick beds: that allows you to sing his praises, while others are groaning with pains; that gives you liberty to attend his ordinances, when others, better than you, are detained therefrom.

II. If baptism be administered, take these directions concerning your carriage on that occasion. 1. Beware of removing before it is over, as many do, for this argues both a contempt of Christ's ordinances, which he hath solemnly instituted for his church's good, and want of charity to the persons to be baptized, in that you will not stay to pray for them, or receive them into the communion of the visible church. As also, it sheweth that you have little regard to

your own souls, in that you turn your back upon such an excellent mean of edification as this is. You that are guilty this way, beware of it for the future. Consider what an irreverent and unbecoming thing it would be, if all would do as you do; and do you not tempt others by your example, to go off with you?

2. Stay still and pray for the members to be ingrafted, as others did for you: pray that God may give the inward grace with the outward seal, and apply Christ's blood to the soul, as water is applied to the body.

3. Remember your own baptism and solemn engagements to Christ. Remember whose name you bear, whose livery you wear, and whose colours ye are sworn to: and be humbled for your manifold pollutions, your falling short of the grace of baptism, and walking contrary to your solemn vows. Examine what fruits you reap from your baptism, and if you have got your interest in pardon of sin, sanctifying grace, and other blessings, sealed to you in that sacrament, cleared up and secured: and try if ye feel the efficacy of Christ's blood, represented and applied in that ordinance, melting your hearts, cleansing you from sin, and quickening you to holiness. I shall say no more in this place concerning our improving of our baptism, nor of those who are witnesses; seeing I have handled these points pretty fully in my Sacramental Catechism, to which the reader is referred.

III. If you be called after the dismissing of the congregation, and before you return home, to attend the funeral of any of your deceased neighbours, let your words and carriage be grave, and suitable to the occasion; abhor that levity aad frothiness which many show at such occasions. When you draw nigh, and see the open grave, think God is causing the grave to open its mouth to warn me of my latter end, and to tell me, "that I must lie there ere long." When you see the bones scattered about the grave's mouth, in fearful confusion, think, My skull and bones will be thus lying and trampled on in a short time, and will not be distinguished from the bones of others; and what folly is it for men to be lifting up themselves, and despising others now? When you hear the doleful murmur that is made by the skulls and clods of earth striking upon the coffin, think with thyself, that it sounds forth these words, "Re-

member thou must die, consider thy latter end." When you see the grave filled up, and covered with earth, and people departing from it, think, Thus will I be carried out, and left alone by all my friends; and there will be none to bear me company in this dark cell, but the worms, who will feast themselves on me, without any to hinder them. O to be always humble and mindful of death!

Lastly, Let not the impressions of your neighbour's funeral wear soon off. Some are under a little concern at the time; but no sooner is the dead interred, and the grave filled up again, but all their serious thoughts vanish, and they return to their sins and pleasures as before. But see that your concern be lasting; go away thinking, I may be the next for whom the grave may be opened—therefore, "I will wait all the days of my appointed time, till my change come."

IV. If there be any public worship, lecture, catechising, or repetition of the sermons this evening; let all who can, attend the same: for as much of the Lord's day as can be, should be spent in public exercises and meetings of God's people. I acknowledge, family duties and secret duties are likewise to be performed, and time must be allowed for them; and it is well when matters are so ordered, that public and private duties do not interfere on the Lord's day. But, whenever they seem to do it, let it be observed as a rule in this case, "the private ought to give place to the public;" for it is one chief end of setting apart this day, solemnly to acknowledge God, and celebrate his worship in the assemblies and meetings of Christians.

Concerning our Behaviour after Public Worship.

I come to the third thing, to shew what is necessary to be done after public worship is over.

1. If you be going home in company with others, then confer together upon the sermons you have heard by the way: for, Deut. xi. 18, 19. you are commanded not only to lay up "God's words in your hearts," but to speak of them when "you walk by the way." We see Christ's hearers talked of the word by the way, Luke xxiv. 32. "Did not our hearts burn within us while he opened to us the scriptures?" I know this is the practice of the Christians in

some places, though I fear there is little of this sort of conferring among us. Instead of it, I fear it is the talk of many, when going home, of this and the other persons they saw in the church, or spake with about worldly affairs.

II. If you have not occasion for converse, then meditate upon what you have heard through the day, Psal. lxii. 10. "God hath spoken once, yea twice have I heard it," saith the psalmist. That which God speaks, you should go over it again in your thoughts, and chew the cud upon it. Let it continue like the ringing of bells sounding in your ears after the bells are ceased. It was a good answer that one coming from church, gave to another, that asked him if the sermon was done? "Nay, says he, the congregation is dismissed, but I hope the sermon is not done."

III. You may also be furnished with other occasional meditations very suitable to the day, from the things you may see by the way. Dost thou see the clouds turning black, and threatening rain, which cause thee to mend thy pace and hasten home? Think, surely afflictions are mercies to God's people; they, like a black cloud, cause them to mend their pace, and long to be home at their Father's house. If our sun should always shine with unclouded beams, we should not make such haste: should we find too much friendship in our inn, and kindness in our pilgrimage, we should be fair to forget our Father's house, and our heritage above.

Dost thou see the sun declining, and hasting down to night? Think, the sun's motion is very swift, though insensible in the mean time: he runs many thousand miles in an hour, and flies with incredible swiftness about the earth, carrying our time about with him; so we (though the most part be insensible of it) are flying as fast to the grave. O then, should not our souls be posting as hard from sin and wrath to Christ our city of refuge? Dost thou see the sun setting, and the darkness coming on? It hath a voice to thee, the day of thy life posteth to an end, the dark night of death comes, when thou must set in the grave! O see thou hast not thy work to begin, when the sun is setting, and thy day ended; for, when the night comes, no man can work; there is no repentance in the grave.

Is the sky clear at the sun-setting, so that it prognosti-

cates a fair morning next day? Think upon the death of an upright man, the latter end of that man is peace. O believer, the evening of thy day shall be serene, and thy sun shall set without clouds: The morning of thy resurrection shall be bright, and thy eternity for ever glorious. No wonder, then, though Balaam wished to "die the death of the righteous, and to have his last end like his."

Is it in the winter time that you are going home, when the sky may be full of stars? Consider how glorious the mansion of the saints must be. since that bespangled roof is but the floor or pavement of their palace: yet that is my home, where I hope to lodge when night comes, and from which I shall never leave. O how many millions of blessed souls dwell therein! How lightsome is their life! And how pleasant is their employment! Shall I ever be satisfied till I be there?

Is it in the summer or harvest time, when you are obliged to go into the field to attend and gather your cattle? Beware of carrying an earthly mind along with you, but labour to learn some heavenly lessons from every thing you see.

Do your cattle stray from you? Think, how ready am I to wander from Christ my Shepherd! "Lord, I have gone astray like a lost sheep:" O! "seek me and find me" again: suffer me not to wander as far as hell, which I will certainly do, if thou let me alone; for of myself I will never find the way back to thee.

Do you see the sun retiring from us, and the summer going away? Mind how the summer days of grace will at length go away, and the winter of sickness and old age come on: Let me be busy now, and imitate the bee, who gathers her meat in the summer, and provides for the winter before it come. Oh let me not sin nor sleep away my days of grace, lest I have it to regret, as Jer. viii. 20. "My harvest is past, my summer is ended, yet I am not saved."

Is it in harvest, when you see the corns cut down through the fields? Think how death with his sickle will cut you down in like manner, Rom. xiv. 15.

See you a tree growing? Think how the axe of death and spiritual judgments is laid to the root of the barren tree, or fruitless professor. Again, think how night and day are like two axes hewing at the root of the tree of man's

life, without rest, when the one is up, the other is down. Every day a part flies off, and every night a chip goes; and so, ere long, our bones will lie "scattered about the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth wood," Psal. cxli. 7. I see my neighbours as cut trees daily falling about me; I find myself beginning to totter and shake with the frequent blows I am getting: O that in the mean time I may be inclineing Christ-wards and heaven-wards! for "as the tree falls so will it lie." See you a worm crawling on the ground? Think upon the worm of conscience that never dies, but gnaws the wicked to all eternity. It is my highest wisdom to make conscience my friend, for it is a "friend that sticks closer than a brother;" it will faithfully attend us on a death-bed, and at a tribunal, and administer cordials to us then. But, if conscience be thine enemy, next to God himself, thou wilt find it the most terrible enemy that ever a poor soul had; thou canst neither resist it, nor flee from it: It is a messenger thou canst not deforce, a witness thou canst not cast, a judge thou canst not decline, and an executioner thou canst not withstand. Poor Christless sinner, it will serve instead of all these against thee. O labour to get it sprinkled in time with Christ's blood, and this will pacify it.

Again, think, What is man but a worm? He is twice so called in one verse, Job. xxv. 26. What a poor weak helpless creature is a worm? it is easily crushed by the foot, and can make no resistance. So weak and helpless is man, with respect to God; he is more easily crushed by the feet of his justice, than a worm is by ours. What madness then is it for a worm to rebel against the Creator of the world? What are the kings and princes of the earth but as so many worms crawling upon his footstool? Each of us must ere long take up our dwelling with the worms, and say to them, "Ye are my brethren and sisters."

Again, behold, as worms, when they creep into the earth, leave their slime behind them about the hole's mouth; so believers when they creep into the grave, leave all their sin and corruption at the grave's mouth, and their souls ascend to God, "without spot or wrinkle."

Concerning our Behaviour at Home on the Sabbath evening.

As soon as you can possibly win home after sermons, set about your secret work, and family duties: Consider, that though the sermons be over, the Sabbath is not over: therefore study to spend the rest of the day in God's service, and keep still the impressions of what you have been hearing upon your spirits. And if you would do this, take these directions:

I. Retire presently for secret prayer and self-examination: Pray over what you have been hearing, and beg that "the Lord may keep it in the imagination of the thoughts of your hearts." This is a good way both to help your memories, and procure a blessing on what you have heard. Consider whether you had any thing of God's Spirit and presence through the day. If God withdrew, then lament after him, and search into the cause. If he "shewed himself through the lattice," then bless him for it, and go on to "walk in the light of his countenance." Hath any good motion been raised in your hearts by the word? Pray for the preservation of it. Hath the word been refreshing and edifying to you? Lay it up in your hearts, and commit that to God to keep for you, which your frail memories cannot retain, pleading, that God may make it forth coming to you against the time of your need. Hath the word discovered any particular sin or lust to you? then bewail and mourn for it, and beg mortifying grace to subdue and conquer it. Have you been negligent in hearing? Lament it, put on new resolutions, and cry to God for strength; and forget not to employ your great Advocate, Jesus Christ. to apologize for your weakness and short-comings, and to separate all the defects from your performances, and offer them up in his censer perfumed with the incense of his merits. Was thy conscience stupid, thy heart hard, and thy mind carnal, while hearing a soul-rousing sermon? Be ashamed of it before God, and chide with thy heart, and say to it, "Art thou worse than Felix a heathen? For his heart "trembled when he heard of judgment to come," Acts xxiv. Art thou worse than devils? For "they believe and tremble," James ii. Oh! shall heathens and devils be sooner moved than my hard heart? Hast thou

reaped no benefit through the day? Let it be matter of exercise and lamentation to thee before the Lord. Let never bare ordinances satisfy thee, without communion with God therein. As Zaccheus climbed up into the sycamore tree to see Jesus, and when once he had got a sight of him there, "he came down joyfully;" so oughtest thou to go up to the sycamore tree of ordinances for this purpose, to see God in Christ; and, unless this sight be granted thee, "come down sorrowfully." When men go to meet their beloved friend at a certain place, and they miss him, how discontentedly do they go away? Alas! what are ordinances without God, but as a table without meat, a well without water, from which a needy soul must needs depart hungry and thursty?

It concerns thee to call thyself to account for thy frame and carriage in hearing, reading, prayer, praise, giving alms, and every duty you have been employed in through the day. As God himself reviewed every day's work of his, and "saw it was good," Gen. i. so should we review every day, and, in a special manner, every Sabbath day's work, and see if it be good or no. Let us "judge ourselves, that we may not be judged."

II. Read over those portions of scripture which you have heard opened, with the scriptures cited by the minister; think on them, and beg the illumination of God's Spirit to make you understand them. We see the Eunuch was reading the scripture upon his return from the public worship, and God blessed it and sent him an interpreter; and if you do so, you may expect the same. He that sent Philip to him, will send his own Spirit to help you; who, when he comes, brings such a divine light along with him, as will make you see the truths of the gospel with another eye, and discover more in the word than ever you beheld in it before: so that, though you have read the same chapters and verses about Christ many times over, yet then you shall be made to say, O where were my eyes till now, that I never saw what was contained here?

III. Labour by all means to keep up the remembrance and impressions of the word thou hast been hearing, on thy mind: Let it not be as a wayfaring man to tarry with thee only for a night; but let it be an inhabitant to dwell with thee all the week over. Hath the Spirit made any warm

impression by the word upon thy soul this day? O watch over them, and strive to preserve and entertain them through the evening, and look to God for help. "Oh Lord, let me not lose the heat of this day, in the cool of the evening. Thy word hath wrought wonderful changes upon others, O that I may likewise experience the same, and have it to say, "I went forth proud, but am come home humble; I went out careless and hard-hearted, but am come back thoughtful and contrite in spirit: I went to church a bond-slave of Satan, but am returned a free man of Christ!"

Poor soul, much depends upon your care and watchfulness over yourself in the evening of the Lord's day, that "you lose not these things wrought in you by the word" through the day. There are many like those soldiers who are victorious in the day, but lose all at night through their security and sloth; they do not watch and stand to their arms, but suffer the enemy to surprize them, to beat up their quarters, and spoil their tents, when they are secure, dreaming of no hazard. Many are like Hannibal, that knew better how to obtain a victory, than how to improve it when got. Watch then against the devil, the world, and your own hearts, and beware of losing at night what you gained through the day.

I shall here give some advice, in order to the cherishing and improving of those good motions, convictions, or resolutions, that may be begot in you by hearing of the word on the Lord's day. These are sparks kindled by the breath of God, therefore do not smother them, but strive to blow them up into a flame by prayer and meditation.

1. Beg earnestly that God, who hath "begun a good work" in thee, may carry it on; that these convictions may terminate in thy conversion here, and thy salvation hereafter. Cry, Lord, suffer not these tender fruits to be nipped in the bud, or blasted in the blossom, by Satan's frost winds, or the world's cold blast; but mercifully cherish and preserve them to maturity, "to the praise of the glory of his grace."

2. Consider what a crying sin it is against God, to neglect or stifle thy convictions: He will treat thee as a murderer if thou do it. It is murder to destroy the "conception in the womb." Christ also will take it as a solemn

affront offered to him; for convictions are the messengers which he sends to prepare the way of his entry into the soul: and will he not highly resent it, to see his messengers killed or maltreated? O what horrid ingratitude is it to Christ, after he hath opened the door of our hearts half-way by convictions, to have it shut against him, when he is just ready to enter; or, when he is half-way in, to be thrust back again, and have the door thrown in his face!

3. Consider how prejudicial it is to thy own soul. The dying away of thy convictions threatens the life of thy soul. If you quench them, God may be provoked to pass that dreadful sentence, "My Spirit shall no longer strive with thee:" and so there follows a midnight silence, and thou art lost for ever. O tremble for fear of God's judgments, for thy case is more dangerous than others. No water freezeth so fast, as that which had once been warmed; and no iron is so hard, as that which hath been oft heated and oft quenched. Therefore,

4. Presently strike in with thy convictions. Bless God for awaking thee, when others about thee are lying in a deep sleep; for visiting thee when others are passed by: Be content to have thy sore lanced, and thy wound searched: Suffer no other plaister to be applied to it but Christ's blood: Go not to heal the wound of thy conscience by the works of the law, and thy own duties; for these will at best but skim it over for a while. Neither go to shift off convictions by delays, as did Felix; for this is the devil's great stratagem to ruin thy soul. It is with the heart as with melted wax; if you clap the seal to it when it is soft, it receives an impression which abides; but if you delay, it soon cools and hardens, so that press on it as you will, it is to no purpose. Let us then imitate David, who when he was convinced of the evil of his ways, "without any delay turned his feet to God's testimonies," Psal. cxix. 59. Put forth thy utmost strength, and stir up thyself to turn from sin, and flee to Christ, while conscience is stirring, the Spirit striving, Christ waiting, his bowels sounding, and his blood pleading; for the loss of this season may be loss of thy soul. God saith thrice in one chapter, Heb. iv. "To-day, to-day, to-day," but the devil cries, "To-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow." Surely God is wisest, and his time fittest. To-day is thy living day, to-morrow may

be thy dying day: To-day thou art on earth, to-morrow thou mayest be in hell: To-day mercy is inviting, to-morrow justice may be smiting; therefore, while thou art called "to-day, hear the voice of God and conscience, and harden not your heart."

IV. Labour to persevere in prayer this evening; do not faint in it, but endeavour with Moses, to "hold up your hands this day till the going down of the sun." Our frequency and importunity in this duty is no trouble, but a delight to the hearer of prayer. Christ saith oft this day to the spouse, "Thy voice is sweet, cause me to hear it." Continue instant in prayer this day, wrestling as Jacob, and saying, "I will not let thee go till thou bless me." And as orators, at the close of their speech, use all their art and skill to move the affections of their auditors; so do you, at the close of the Lord's day, put forth all your grace and spiritual strength in prayer, to prevail with God for a blessing. Pray this evening, as if it were to be thy last Sabbath, thy last night, or thy last prayer; knowing, that when death comes, thou canst pray no more: For, as death binds up the hand that it can work no more, so it strikes dumb the tongue that it can speak no more; according to Eccl. ix. 10. Isa. xxxviii. 18.

V. Study to be denied to all your Sabbath prayers and performances. Beware, my friends, of secret trusting to them, as any piece of righteousness before God; for that will spoil all, like the dead fly in the apothecary's ointment. Say therefore this day, after ye have done all, "We are unprofitable servants." Look above all, as if you had done nothing at all, to the righteousness of Christ to answer for all. See that you join nothing of your own with this perfect righteousness, in the point of your justification and acceptance with God; for this is both dishonourable to Christ, and dangerous to yourselves: therefore beware of it. There is a natural popery in the mind of all; we much incline to stand upon our own legs, and to have something of our own to found upon. But is it any other thing than blasphemy, to charge Christ's sacrifice with lameness, or his work with deficiency? or to think with our penny to make up Christ's sum, and with our polluted duties to add any perfection to the blood of Christ, which is infinite? Shall not we rest content with that wherewith God hath

declared himself well-pleased! Let us then with Paul, "count all things but dung and loss for Christ and his righteousness," and desire only to be found in him.

Concerning Family Duties on the Sabbath night.

IN the next place, I proceed to speak of family duties requisite this night, and how these are to be performed.

I. O heads of families, see that ye be more solemn, full and particular in family-worship this evening, than at other times: It is pleasant this night to hear universally the melody of God's praise in the tabernacles of the righteous. Lay out your family-sins, wants and mercies, fully and plainly before God in family prayer.

II. Confer about the sermons, and repeat over what you have heard; for the Lord, Deut. xi. 18, 19. requires you not only to lay up God's words in your hearts, but also to "speak of them when you sit in your houses, and to teach them to your children." You ought also to call your servants and children to an account, as to what they remember, and how they have profited by the sermons. When you send your servants to the market, you examine what market they have made: Now, the public ordinances are heaven's free market for their souls, and will you never inquire what they have gained thereat? This way of rehearsing the sermons, is very refreshing and advantageous, and hereby one of you would be useful to another; for what one forgets another may remember.

III. Let parents and heads of families take some time this evening in catechising and instructing their children and servants in the knowledge of the principles of religion, and of their duty towards God, their neighbours, and themselves. We may observe, from the iv. of Mark, and xiv. of Luke, that after our Lord had instructed the people as a public preacher on the Sabbath day, he afterwards did examine and teach his twelve disciples as a private master of a family.

1. Begin with children, as soon as they are capable, and inform them, that there is such a Being as God whom, they ought to honour, reverence and love above all things: That they are his creatures, the work of his hands: That he preserves them, and gives them all the good things

they enjoy ; and that every good thing is to be sought from God by prayer, and thanks returned to him for the same. Shew them the evil and danger of sin and how much God hates it : That they have immortal souls : That there is a life after death in another world, wherein men shall receive a great and eternal reward, or a fearful endless punishment, according as they have done or neglected their duty in this world. And that God loves those who keep his commandments and pray to him ; but hates wicked men, and those who do not pray. If these principles were early instilled and rooted in children, they would in some measure stick with them all their days. Likewise. as they are capable, shew them the great degeneracy and corruption of human nature, derived to us by the fall of our first parents : also shew them the way of our recovery from this miserable state by Jesus Christ, who was sent by God to redeem and save us from the bondage of sin and Satan, and from the damnation of hell.

2. Before they are capable to read, or get and repeat our Shorter Catechism, you ought to frame many short questions and answers concerning the foresaid principles, such as they are able to mind, and frequently examine them upon them : And, for your help in this matter you may consult the little catechism I have published, called *The Mother's Catechism for the young child.* But as soon as your children are able to repeat our Shorter Catechism, enjoin them and your servants also, to commit it to their memories, prescribing so much of it to them every week, and duly examine them upon it every Lord's day : for it contains an excellent scheme both of the principles of our religion which we ought to believe, and also of the duties thereof which we should practise. And is it not far better to repeat this, than idle ballads and stories, wherewith many burden their memories ?

3. As you ought to learn them to read, so you should this day solemnly enjoin them to read the Bible and other pious books, and inquire of them what they have been reading through the day and the bypast week.—And because of the natural backwardness that is both in young and old to holy duties, you ought to contrive the most wise and effectual methods you can think on, to engage them to delight and diligence in reading of the Bible ; such as these,

viz. Teach children the most profitable, pleasant and affecting histories and passages of the Bible: such as, "the creation of man, Adam's fall, the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the sacrificing of Isaac, the selling of Joseph, Pharaoh's killing of the infants, the preservation of Moses; his going up to the mount, and getting the tables of the law; the passages concerning Sampson's killing the Philistines, and David's killing Goliah; the forty-two children destroyed by bears; the three children in the fiery furnace; Daniel in the lion's den; Jonah in the whale's belly; Herod's destroying the young children," and the like. Endeavour to tell them these passages as much as you can in their own language, and this will engage them to the greater delight and attention, and cause them to remember them the better; also, you should put them to rehearse them over again to you.

Again, cause them to read a chapter of the Bible every night, and tell you some of the principle things in it before they lie down; or, when you read a chapter in the family, appoint each of them some one verse of it to repeat the next day. Moreover, when they come to learn to write, it is a good way to give them paper-books, to write down what passages they think most considerable in the Bible, or what remarkable sayings and histories they find in other books. They might well spend the Saturday's afternoon this way, when they have most leisure.

In the next place, it would be of good use, when you examine them, to teach them to prove every point of religion by some pregnant place of scripture. This would be the way to beget in them firm, strong and fixed persuasions of the truths of Christianity. Many, alas! profess Christianity, merely because it is the national religion, and they were so educated: they build their faith more upon the assertions and teachings of men, than upon the sure foundation of God's word, and all because they were not put to it when young, to acquaint themselves with the scriptures, or to bring proofs from them for the truths they learned. Are not there many professors of Christianity, who, if they were put to it, could not give one text of scripture to prove so much as the great fundamentals of their religion? It cannot be expected that such will be close adherers to it in a day of trial and persecution. A good way to mend this

fault is, to get the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, which are printed with the scripture proofs set down at large, and make much use thereof. *Lastly*, As you ought to cause them to attend punctually this day upon the ordinances, so you ought carefully this night to ask an account of the text, and their notes of the lecture and sermons; reprove them for careless hearing, encourage them when they give any tolerable good account, and promise them some reward to do better the next Sabbath.

4. You ought this day to learn and enjoin your children to pray, and to ask a blessing, and give thanks for their meat: you may see some helps for them in the end of the Mother's Catechism before mentioned. Children cannot pray at first without help: therefore it is fit to teach them some short forms; and, in the first place, the Lord's Prayer, the great pattern of all prayer. Teach them to retire every morning and evening to pray, and to pray frequently on the Lord's day; and also cause them to go and pray together by turns; this would be a good mean to engage their love to one another, and to cause them to study to be more grave and exact in their prayers: and therefore it were fit also to cause them to pray sometimes in your own hearing. Enjoin them also to be fervent and sincere in prayer, and to pray with a lively sense of God's all-seeing eye that beholds in secret, and with an awful regard to the judgment of the great day. Likewise, when they come to any capacity, tell them, that they must not restrict themselve to these forms, but must make additions of their own framing; tell them that God loves these words best that come from the heart; and, for their help therein, tell them often of their sin and misery by nature, and of their need of Christ, and his blood to wash and save them; direct them frequently to say, "Lord teach me to pray, give me thy Spirit to help me to pray." Also every Sabbath night inquire of them what new words and expressions they have got and added to their prayers, and encourage and reward them according to their diligence. O parents neglect not to teach your poor children to pray and read: Will you teach them to work, and not teach them to pray? If you do it not, the devil will teach them to dam, lie, and play on the Lord's day. And will it not be a fearful reckoning that you will have to make ere long for their prayerless and perishing

souls ? A great many children neglect prayer, not so much from their aversion to it. as from this, that none takes care to teach them how to do it ; and hence it is, they often neglect it all their days. Whereas, if they were early taught and put on the duty of prayer, the habit and custom of the thing would make it turn easy and delightful ; but, when this is neglected, they cannot afterwards be brought to it, without great reluctance and difficulty. So that you see, O parents, if ye improve not the season of youth, the blood of your children's souls will be laid to your door.

5. It is very proper on this day, as soon as your children are capable, to take them aside, and solemnly to tell them the vows you took on you at baptism in their name, and as sponsors for them, and how you publickly engaged "that they would be the Lord's, and renounce the world, the devil, and the flesh :" And therefore, for your own exoneration, you should make them solemnly engage to do and perform all those things which you promised in their name. Put them to it personally and explicitly to own and renew their baptismal covenant, to shew themselves Christians, not only by their parent's dedication, but also by their own deed and voluntary consent. Let each of them profess and say "I choose God the Father for my God and Father, I choose God the Son for my Redeemer and Saviour, I choose the Holy Ghost for my Guide and Sanctifier, God's word for my rule, God's people for my companions, holiness for my way, and heaven for my home."

6. Take care this evening to give both them and your servants many serious and affectionate admonitions concerning their souls, and their duties to God and man. Warn them solemnly against sin and vice, and particularly those vices that are too common among us : study to check and discourage the beginnings of vice in children ; observe and watch the first appearances thereof, and pluck them up by the roots : For, if vice be connived at in the beginning, it will turn afterwards too strong for you ; but when it is never suffered to appear to pass without reproof or correction, this helps by degrees to breed in children an abhorrence of it. Labour in a special manner to beget in them frightful impressions of the sins of swearing, and profaning the name of God, the sin of disobedience to parents, the sin of Sabbath-breaking, of lying, obscene words, steal-

ing, pride, passion, revenge, neglect of prayer and reading, &c. Study to persuade them to godliness with the most endearing language, and prevailing arguments, according to Prov. xxxi. 1, 2, 3. that so you may convince them that in all your admonitions and reproofs, you have an earnest desire for their welfare, and that you and they may dwell in heaven together through all eternity. It is sometimes needful solemnly to obtest and charge them to mind their duty; as Mr. Bolton, a godly man said to his children on his death-bed, "I charge you, O my children, not to meet me at Christ's tribunal in a Christless and graceless condition."

7. Join fervent prayers this day with your endeavours; for prayerless instructions will not profit. Parents may plant, ministers may water, "but God only can give the increase." You ought to take some time this day to pity, mourn and pray for your children, servants and relations, that are in the darkness of a natural state, and under the slavery of Satan. If any of them were taken by the Turks, and laid in dark dungeons, treated as slaves, scourged every day, and barbarously used; would not your bowels yearn, and your hearts bleed for them? Or, if any of your near relations were dead, would you not mourn for them? And are you not more concerned to mourn and pray for them that are Satan's slaves, justice's prisoners, spiritually dead, and sentenced to everlasting death? Have you any love to your children, and will you not carry them this day in the arms of faith and prayer to the blessed Jesus, beseeching him "to put his hands of mercy on them, and bless them?" as in Matt. xix. 13. yea, not only pray for them, but take them along with you, and let them be the eye and ear witnesses of your prayers, sighs and tears, for the conversion and salvation of their souls; and who knows but this might work upon their hearts? Let them hear you say to God, as Jacob. Gen. xxxiii. 5. "Lord thou hast graciously given me these children, but, Oh! (you may add) Lord, I have given them sin, that is their portion from me. Lord, though I cannot give them Christ and grace, yet thou canst do both; they are born to me once, O that they may be born to thee a second time!" Say as Abraham, Gen. xvii. "O that my Ishmael may live before thee!" And Deut. xxxiii. "Let my Reuben live, and not die." Let

these who are pieces of my bowels, and are now dead in trespasses and sin, live in thy sight; thou art the Lord of life, breathe on them, and they shall live. Lord let not these who are so dear to me fry in the flames forever: one house holds us now, let one heaven hold us hereafter. Cry, as those in the gospel, Matt. xvii. "Lord. have mercy on my son;" "my daughter is grievously vexed:" Lord, come and heal them, and let me see my children to be the work of thy hands in the midst of thy house; then shall not my face wax pale, nor be ashamed, but I will sanctify the Holy One of Israel," Isa. xxix. 22, 23.

But, in the midst of these secret and family duties, necessary on the evening of the Lord's day, it is needful that our frail bodies be refreshed with meat and drink; and, the work of the day being near over, you are at the more freedom to eat plentifully; yet still with holy fear and caution, and a desire spiritually to improve the time of eating, and to make God's glory your end, in eating and drinking, 1 Cor. x. 31.

If you be to have company or strangers with you, then look to God for wisdom to behave yourselves in all your words and deportment, that you may neither do them harm, nor get harm from them. Say, "O that my lips this night were like those of the righteous which feed many!"

When you are called to sit down to supper this night, think or say, "How happy were I, if I were now called to sit down and sup with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, at that higher table that shall never be drawn, where they enjoy an everlasting Sabbath, that hath no night nor darkness to follow upon it, as this hath!"

When you see the table covered for you, O bless the Author of it, and say, "When God remembers me, let me not forget him; O let not my table turn a snare to me; let me never make a god of my belly, nor employ my chief care for the meat that perisheth!"

When the meat is brought, let us, according to our Saviour's example, look up to heaven, and pray for a blessing on our food, and for the sanctified use of God's creatures, that we may taste covenant-love in common mercies, and enjoy the Creator while using the creature. Then think, "O how sweet would these mercies be, if they come dipt in the blood of Christ, and through the channel of the ever-

lasting covenant to me! If I could enjoy them, not as a creature, but as an heir, "and a joint heir with Christ," who is the "heir of all things," and hath been pleased to adopt believers in his right! O how sweet, if every morsel did come from my Father's hand, and sent from his table, as an earnest of greater and better things laid up for me above! Lord, I am not worthy of the least crumb that falls from the table of thy providence, and yet thou coverest a full table to worthless me; "what shall I render to the Lord?"

Is thy provision but small? Then study to be content therewith: Consider how cheerfully Christ the Heir of all things did thank God for coarse and mean fare, John vi. when he had but a few barley loaves and small fishes for himself and his whole family. How much better provided are we, than Christ and his numerous family was? And shall we not be easy and thankful?

Have you a full table? Then fear lest these outward things ensnare your heart; and, for preventing of it, think, "O what a poor portion would these things be, if I get no better! O how miserable will I be, if when God gives me bread to the full, he should send leanness to my soul!" Therefore remember Luther's solemn protest to God, when a bountiful present was sent him, he protested, "That he would not be put off with common mercies."

But, if you have any clearness concerning your interest in Christ, the sight of God's goodness to you in a full table, should cause you to rejoice in him, and say, "All this and heaven too! O what a good Master do we serve!"

When you have eaten, and are full, see that ye forget not God your Maker and Benefactor, but with heart and mouth, in a solemn manner, give thanks to him. O believers, you have four things particularly to give thanks for; 1. That God gives mercies to furnish your table. 2. Health to use them. 3. Peace to meet together. 4. That ye have a right to them; I mean not a common, but a covenant-right, a right by virtue of Christ's purchase.

It were very agreeable to conclude all by singing a psalm of praise.

I do not offer to stint any Christian family to any precise particular method of performing duties on the Sabbath even-

ing, but must leave that to be determined by the prudence of masters of families, according to the circumstances of their families. Some may find it convenient to catechise their children and servants. and repeat the sermons before supper. some after: so some may perform family-worship before, some after; others both before and after. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind; only labour that no duty incumbent be omitted.

I do not say that all the forenamed duties, in all their solemnity, are indispensably necessary every Lord's day; for time and circumstances may so straiten us, that we cannot get them performed so fully as before directed, especially as to the instruction of children, and examination of ourselves; but what cannot be overtaken in one Sabbath let it be done in another. I have chosen to be pretty full in this directory, because it may be useful also for other days in the week.

Concerning Secret Duties at the close of the day.

WHEN family duties are over, and the condition of our weak and weary bodies begins to call for sleep and rest, let us endeavour to close this holy day in a due and suitable manner. Take these few directions:

1. When you find sleep beginning to assault you, think, "O how soon are we tired of doing good! O that we could say, Though we may be somewhat weary with our work, yet we are not weary of our work! And it is our regret, that we should be laid under a necessity of losing so much of our time in sleeping, and should lie so long, incapable of serving either God or man. Let this make us long to be there, where there shall be no need of sleep, but we shall be like the angels of God, who never sleep nor rest from serving and beholding God

II. Think how terrible is it for a Christless unconverted sinner to lie down this night with so many millions of unpardoned sins on his back, to sleep securely within the flood-mark of God's vengeance, and within a step of hell! O unconverted man, consider your continual hazard: you never lay down with assurance to rise again; you never slept one Sabbath night, with assurance you would see another Sabbath, or hear another sermon; and how can you

live at peace in such a condition? Death and hell are ever before you: it is a wonder you do not think on them by day, and dream of them by night, lie down in fear, rise in fear, and live in fear, lest death come before you be converted; it is a wonder you can get any sleep in this condition. If your body want but meat, drink or clothing, yea, if you have but an aching tooth, it hinders you to sleep; and yet wilt thou sleep, O sinner when both soul and body are on the brink of hell, and the devil gaping and roaring for you? O then resolve you "will not give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids," till your soul be in a better condition; at least, till you pour out your heart, confess your sins, lay down your weapons of rebellion, and bemoan your case before the Lord, and look up to Christ for pity and pardon. We should not willingly venture to sleep in that case we would not venture to die in. How many have been hurried into eternity in a moment! O think with yourself, "Death may be within a day's march of me; to-day I am sinning but to-morrow I may be dying. O what if death take me doing the devil's work? will it not send me to him to receive my wages?"

III. Before you lie down this night, confess and mourn over the sins of the bypast day; lament your manifold short-comings in public, in private, and secret duties; say, "Alas for the mean and low conceptions I have had of God, the great object of worship this day! What formality and hypocrisy in my approaches to him! O how vain and wandering were my thoughts, when they should have been most fixed and intent upon God! How dark and blind was my understanding, when God's truths were laid before me! How little of the evil of sin, or beauty of holiness did I see! Lord, how hard and flinty was my heart, little affected by all the strokes of the hammer of thy word upon it! How dead and carnal were my affections, little moved by all the rich displays and offers of Christ's love and beauty! How sleepy was my conscience, little startled by all the reproofs and threatenings of thy word! How false and treacherous was my memory, in letting slip the sweet counsels and comforts I heard! O what by-ends have I had in duty this day! How little have I been concerned for the interest of Christ's church and kingdom in the world! How idle and unedifying have my words been, when in company! O how little have I done for God's glory, or my neighbour's

good this day!" And, having thus humbly confessed your sins and short-comings this day, make application to the blood of Christ for pardon, and to his intercession for acceptance with God, that so you may lie down this night in a reconciled state with him.

IV. Commit yourselves by fervent prayer to God's tuition and protection through the night, even to the protection of "him that keeps Israel, who never slumbers nor sleeps." You cannot sleep in safety, unless God watch for you; for, while you are sleeping, there are many enemies and evil spirits about you, seeking your hurt; and you have no friend then but God to look to you: You are then both insensible of your danger, and unable to help yourself. Pray then that God may set a hedge about you, that Satan cannot break through, and that he may appoint his angels to pitch their tents round about you, and all you have. Pray that God himself may watch over you while you are sleeping, and may keep you from being disturbed or defiled by evil dreams or imaginations in the night. Would you have your rest refreshing, your sleep sweet, and your dreams instructing, and, God himself to be your Keeper and Guard in the night? Then close this day with fervent and believing prayer to God in Christ. He were a foolish governor of a city, that would betake himself to rest before he set the watch for the city's safeguard.

V. Endeavour to lie down this night with thankful hearts to God; let us bless God for the Sabbath, and for all the mercies of it, especially for the joyful sound of the gospel, and the news of Christ. But O let us not be content with hearing the joyful sound, without knowing the same; with the news of Christ, without an interest in Christ; with Christ revealed to us, without Christ revealed in us. Let us not be like foolish children, that play by the light of that candle which is set up for their preparing for going to rest, lest light be extinguished, and we go at last to the bed of the grave in the darkness of sin and sorrow. Had you any comfortable view of your interest in Christ? or had you any thing of his Spirit or presence this day in the ordinances? then rejoice in God, and say with the psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

Again, bless God for health and peace to lie down with. "Some are distressed, they dare not lie down for lack of breath; others are chased from their beds and dwellings by the raging sword or pestilence; and behold, I may lie down without any to make me afraid." Further, let us bless the Lord that we have warm beds to lie on, and not the cold ground, with a stone for our pillow, as Jacob had. Many of God's dear saints, of whom the world was not worthy, were put to lie "in dens and caves of the earth." Nay, "the Son of man had no where to lay his head," while he lived in this ungrateful world. Wonder at his humiliation, and say, "Had it not been for him, instead of a refreshing bed, I might have been lying down this night in the flames of hell."

VI. It is very proper this night, as well as every night, to lie down with thoughts of death and eternity. Think, now I have one Sabbath less to live in the world; and, O that thereby I may be a Sabbath-day's journey nearer heaven, where I shall celebrate an eternal Sabbath, that will never draw near an end! O to be there where there is no sleep, no night to interrupt the saints' communion with God! When you are putting off your clothes, think, the time is near when you must put off this earthly tabernacle. When you lay aside your garments, think, so must I shortly lay aside the garment of this body. O may I then expect immediately to be clothed upon with glory and immortality, and shall I not long for that time? This body, in its best estate, is but a prison to a believing soul, and detains it from its happiness. Plato, though a heathen, had such clear apprehensions of the immortality of the soul, that he said to one that fed highly, "What mean you to make your prison so strong?" Am I a believer in Christ, and shall not I be looking through the grates of mortality, till the jailer come and open my prison door, knock off the fetters of sin, and set me at liberty, that I may with joy fly to my eternal rest? Moreover, think how willing we are to put off our clothes at night, that we may go to rest, especially when we are weary; and wish and say, O that I were in a condition to put off the body at death with as great willingness and satisfaction! and, with Paul, long "to be dissolved," and to put off this clay tabernacle. Mr. Dod, a holy man, saith, "If parents should tell children,

who have played all day, that they must go to bed; they begin to cry, and shew reluctancy: but a labouring man is glad when night comes, that he may go to rest. So (says he) to the wicked, who have misspent the day of their life, death is an unwelcome guest; but the godly are tossed and wearied in this world, and therefore are content to go to the bed of the grave, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest." Job. iii 17. Sin wearies them, Satan wearies them, the wicked weary them, sickness and crosses weary them, and Christ's absence wearies them of the world, and no wonder they desire to be at rest from all these troubles."

When you see yourself stript of your clothes, think "Naked came I into the world, and naked shall I return;" I can carry nothing hence of all my earthly enjoyments. Lord, let me never choose my portion in these things I must leave eternally behind me. Let worldlings reflect on this: all those things, for which you have toiled and laboured for many years, you must leave in one night, Luke xii. 20. Nothing of all your earthly treasures can you carry along with you to another world, unless it be the rust thereof, to witness against you, and eat up your souls as a canker to all eternity, according to James v. 1. 3. Whatever be your enjoyments here, remember death stands as a porter at the gate of eternity, to see, that "as you brought nothing into the world, you carry nothing out of it," 1 Tim. vi. 7. A coffin and a winding-sheet shall be the most of it. You may imagine what a broad look the poor soul will give then to those things you made your treasure here. O, will it say, must I part for ever with all my riches? must I be set naked ashore in eternity, having nothing to relieve me? must I suffer an everlasting famine? Poor soul, the world's treasures do not pass current in another world: they cannot there purchase you any relief, or buy so much as "one drop of water to cool thy flaming tongue."

Let your lying down in bed, and covering you with clothes, put you in mind of your lying down in the cold grave, and your being covered up with earth. Look on your bed as a tomb or sepulchre; and every night, before you enter into it, seek reconciliation with God, and new discoveries of his love in Christ, as you would do if going to your grave. How sad is it to be dying without Christ, and

God reconciled through him? Again, think or say, "O that the grave may be a bed of rest to me, upon the account of Christ's lying therein!" The grave has become a bed of roses to believers, by the Rose of Sharon's lying down in it. Christ hath hereby sweetened and perfumed it for them. Am I a believer, and shall I fear to lie down in my Redeemer's bed? O believer, thou mayest every night say, with the psalmist, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou blessed Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety," Psal. iv. 8. When you are laid down, "commune with your own heart upon your bed," and, with the psalmist, "remember God upon your bed, and meditate on him in the night watches:" And, if you fall asleep with some heavenly meditation in your thoughts, your sleep will be more sweet, your dreams more comfortable, and your awaking more refreshful. And, in a special manner, let us endeavour, on the Sabbath-night, that as we began this day with the delightful remembrance of Christ's resurrection, so to close it with the cheerful expectation of Christ's second coming, and our awaking and rising from the grave to meet him. And when Christ is saying, "Surely I come quickly;" O that we may be in case this night to answer, "Amen, even so come Lord Jesus!"

Concerning our carriage after the Sabbath is over.

Thus have I finished the second general head in this direction, viz. What is requisite in performing the duties of the Sabbath, when it is come? It remains that I should speak a word to the third, viz. What is incumbent on us at the end of the Sabbath, or when it is past?

When the next day cometh, and we are again to fall to our weekly employments, we ought to retain lively impressions of the preceding day's work on our spirits, and not soon forget what we have seen and heard on the Sabbath. In the first place, let us repent for the sins and shortcomings of the Sabbath, and beg forgiveness thereof from God, that we go not about our worldly employments with the guilt of the Sabbath-day's sins upon us, lest they bring a curse upon the "works of our hands." Again, let us pray, and endeavour to bring much of a Sabbath-day's frame into the business of the week, and retain much of it through

the week, that so we may be the fitter for the next Sabbath, yea, and in case to long for it: This would be a fair way to obtain a blessing on the labours of the week, and to prosper the "works of our hands." Oh! shall we bring so much of the week with us into the Sabbath, and will we bring nothing of the Sabbath with us into the week? O let us study to be so "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," as to "walk in the Spirit" all the week thereafter, mindful both of the Sabbath past, and of the Sabbath next ensuing; because it is said to us every day. "Remember the Sabbath-day that ye may keep it holy." Had we more of Sabbath-day's thoughts on week days, then week-day thoughts would less trouble us on the Sabbath-days.

DIRECTION IV.

Concerning the Particular Sins, whereby the Sanctification of the Sabbath is hindered, or the Sabbath profaned.

IF we would duly sanctify the Lord's day, we must conscientiously guard against, and abstain from, all those sins which are opposite thereunto; whether they be sins of omission, or commission, sins of the heart, of the tongue, or of the life.

Of Sins of Omission on the Lord's Day.

1. I shall begin with sins of omission, and neglect of the duties of the Sabbath. There are many alas! that make this altogether an idle day they consume it away in doing nothing, and keep it no better than do the beasts; they abstain from the works of religion, as much as from the works of their calling, never considering that the Lord's day is profaned by sloth and idleness, as well as by servile labour or immoral actions. There are many who place all their religion in negatives, like the Pharisees, Luke xviii. 11. and foolishly think to be justified by their negative holiness. "I never wronged my neighbour (say some,) I did not mock at religion, swear, nor get drunk," &c. But remember, a man may abstain from evil, and yet go to hell for not doing good, Matt. iii. 10. A tree is cut down for bringing forth no fruit, as soon as for bringing forth bad fruit. It is as dangerous not to do things commanded, as to do

things forbidden, Matt. xxiii. 23. There is a woe pronounced against the one, as well as the other. The slothful servant is reckoned a wicked servant, Matt. xxv. 26. and adjudged to utter darkness as well as the most vicious. Wherefore beware of profaning the Lord's day by idleness, or neglecting of the public, private, or secret duties above mentioned, which are requisite on this day: And, in a special manner beware,

First, Of neglecting the hearing of the word this day, or forsaking the assemblies of God's people upon it. What madness is it to slight the means of saving your lives, and delivering your souls from hell? What contempt is it of Christ's bowels of mercy? If a great king should send an ambassador to a condemned malefactor, with offers of remission; would it not highly exasperate him, if he refused so much as to hear him? O what may God say to such foolish sinners in the day of their distress, when they cry to him? May he not send you to the gods you have served, and tell you, "Ye would not come and hear me when I sent most gracious proposals of peace to you, neither will I hear you now?" With what torture and anguish will you eternally reflect on your folly? If you could now but lay your ear to hell's door, and hear such gospel-slighters crying out against their sin, it would make your hearts tremble. Suppose you heard them say, "O if time could be recalled, what would we give to hear one gospel sermon from the most despised minister! How many miles would we go! Yea, we would run from sea to sea, to hear one encouraging sentence from Christ's mouth, or his messengers: nay, we would be content to suffer a thousand years darkness for one day's gospel light, a thousand years burning for one day of the Son of man, many whereof we have neglected: But, Oh! there is no hope, the season is lost, the sentence past, and we are irrecoverably undone!" O how will the devils wonder at your folly, and eternally upbraid you with it?

Secondly, Beware of neglecting family duties on the Sabbath: The fourth command binds masters of families to be careful hereof; yet, alas! how sadly are they neglected! In many places no family prayers or praises, no family instructions, no family reading of God's word is to be found. Instead of "delighting in the law of the Lord,"

which is the character of the blessed man, Psal. i. 2. it is laid by as a sealed book. The dust, which, many suffer their Bibles to gather beside them, will be a fearful witness against them one day. But more particularly, I shall speak,

Of the evil of neglecting Family Duties.

1. To deter you from the neglect of family worship, consider in what a miserable state prayerless families are. The Spirit of God ranks them into the same category with the "heathen that know not God." Jer. x. 25. For how should the families of Christians be distinguished from those of Turks and Pagans, but by the badge of family-worship? Without this badge then, you are ranked with heathens or persons excommunicated, that is, such as are cast out of the church into the devil's hands; for of such Christ saith, "Let him be to thee as a heathen." Again, consider what is there threatened against you; a black cloud continually hangs over your families, ready every moment to pour out wrath and fury upon you, not in small drops, but in great showers to overwhelm you at once, from which your houses cannot defend you, though their foundations were on a rock, their walls of brass, and their doors of iron: for while you are without family-prayer, you want a roof to keep off the shower of wrath, and lie night and day exposed to this terrible threatening, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." It is not simply anger that is threatened, but fury, wrath in the greatest height and rage. O let prayerless families, through the land tremble at this threatening! I fear, if it were presently executed, it would make thin cities and parishes somewhere: But though God be patient and long-suffering, yet believe it, there are secret and invisible curses which light and lie upon prayerless families, and the works of their hands. Neglect of prayer doth uncover the roof to let God's curses drop through upon your persons, children, tables, and all your enjoyments; for you deprive yourselves of all security and protection. Family prayer is an excellent roof to your houses; it is like the roof that is made of Irish oak, which no venomous spider will touch, or lodge in.—Family-worship duly performed, dislodges sin and vice; nay, it dislodges the devil also:

And for these houses that are haunted with evil spirits, whatever other reason may be given for it, no doubt this is one; God's worship hath not been duly performed therein. And though the devil doth not appear in a visible or audible manner, yet he certainly haunts prayerless houses; for he hopes for large draughts out of them. Why? sin and wickedness are fair to reign there; malice, pride, deceit and intemperance will bear sway; swearing, cursing, and lying, will be the language of the house, and the children will learn it betimes. But, when prayer is introduced into a family, these vices are banished, and Satan removes: For either prayer will make you give over sinning, or sinning will make you give over praying; they cannot dwell well together. But the house which the unclean spirit finds empty of prayer, is a house swept and garnished for him and a black train of vices to enter and dwell in. If God's worship be not in the house, you may write "Lord, have mercy upon us," upon the door, as they use to do when a house is shut up with the plague. What can we expect in a prayerless house, but the plagues and curses of God? Abraham expected no good in a prayerless place; therefore says he of Gerar, Gen. xx. 11. "Surely, the fear of God is not in this place; they will slay me," &c. What a miserable place or house must that be, where God's fear is not? Surely it must be a sink of sin, a butt of wrath, a cage of unclean birds, a habitation of devils.

O masters of families, will you pity the souls of your families? Tremble lest their blood be found in your skirts. When a child or servant dies out of your family, it will be sad if conscience have it to tell you, "Here one has died out of your house with whom you never prayed; you dwelt together, eat together, wrought together many years, but you never prayed together. And what if his soul be gone to hell through your neglect! What if his blood be charged on you? How will you answer for it? Who knows but if he had seen and heard you pray, your words and example might have moved him to go into a secret corner and pray for his own soul, and so he might have been singing with the saints in heaven, instead of howling with the damned in hell?"

But if the case be so melancholy when they die from you, surely it will be far worse when you come to die your-

selves. You have all your days kept your families godless and prayerless: well, what accounts will you give of your stewardships, when you may be no longer stewards? and what anguish do you think will seize on you, when, with Dives, you shall feel yourselves in hell, and then begin (not before) to lift up your eyes to heaven, and see the godly praying ones, whom you despised afar off, and a great gulf fixed between you and them; and also, when you shall see those of your prayerless families, whom you ruined by your example and influence, brought down to the same place of torment, to increase your misery, and add fuel to your flames? O masters of prayerless families, think on these things in time.

Oh! will neither the fear of hell, nor hopes of heaven persuade you to family prayer? I am sure far less would do it, could I assure you that the daily performance of it would gain you an estate of ten thousand merks a year: you would try it as you can, and be punctual in it too; you would no more pretend multitude of business, want of time, gifts or confidence. And are you so atheistical, as to prefer a little of the world to heaven? Or suppose there were strict laws made, that, for every time you neglected prayer, you should be thrown into a "den of lions," as Daniel was for praying; or that you should lose a finger off your hand, or but pay a hundred merks of fine; would you not pray as you can, and find time for it also, rather than lose your life, finger, or money? And are not the laws of God more awful and strict than the laws of men? Is not hell's dungeon, or a den of devils, more terrible than a den of lions? Are not hell's torments more fearful than the loss of a finger! Is not the wrath of the great God more dreadful than a fine? Oh, will not the fear of God prevail more with you than the fear of man? Remember Daniel's zeal of family-prayer, who chose rather to be cast to the lions, before he would forbear it for one day: Oh, what shall we say of those, who will rather venture to be an eternal prey to the roaring lion, than be at this pains for salvation to themselves or their families; but you may hear in their houses twenty oaths for one prayer!

2. Consider the great sin of neglecting family-instructions upon the Sabbath, which, alas! is so common, by reason whereof many children and servants are ignorant, pray-

erless, and graceless: Their parents and masters do not teach them to read, nor instruct them concerning the principles of religion: they neither pray for them, nor direct them how to pray for themselves. Is the knowledge of Christ a choice and excellent treasure? and will you withhold it from those whom you love, seeing it will not make you the poorer, but the richer, to communicate it to them? It is the commendation of Abraham, that he both made his household know God's ways, and commanded them to obey the same," Gen. xviii 19. and do you ever think to land in Abraham's bosom, that will not tread in Abraham's footsteps? Have you no pity or compassion on them that are "bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh?" Where is the yearning of your bowels towards their precious souls, that are in a starving and perishing condition for lack of knowledge? Will you be like cruel ostriches, Job xxxix. that are "hardened against their young ones," and leave them to be destroyed after they bring them forth? Will you, in like manner, bring forth your young ones, and then carelessly leave them to be a prey to the devil, and eternally to be torn to pieces by him? Are you indifferent about those that came forth of your loins, and whom you profess to love so dearly, whether they live with the blessed Jesus in heaven, or with the cursed devils in hell? Remember, O parents, who neglect the education of your children, God may punish you for it, even in this world, by their unnatural and undutiful carriage to you in old age, whereby they may bring down your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave; and no wonder though they make no conscience of their duty to you, who made no conscience to teach them their duty to God. Remember also, how many children have been brought to a miserable end in this world by the negligence and unfaithfulness of their parents this way; some going to the gibbet have bitterly reflected on their parents as the cause of their ruin, for giving them such a bad example, and not instructing them in the time of their youth. But above all consider how your children and servants may rise up and accuse you at the bar of God at the great day, and say, "Lord, there stands my father, there stands my master, he never taught us, prayed with us, or for us; he neglected prayer, he cursed, he lied, he broke the Sabbath, and so did we after his example. It is true, we are justly condemned, but yet we perish through

their neglect, our blood is upon their heads." O parents, will it not make you speechless, and sting you to the heart, to hear your poor children crying out against you in that day, saying, "Had you noticed our souls as well as our bodies, had you been as careful to teach us the knowledge of God as of such a trade, it had not been with us as it is this day; we had not now stood trembling in expectation of that dreadful doom, which is just ready to be past upon us. Cursed be the man that begat us, and the paps that gave us suck; it is to you we owe our eternal ruin and misery."

O negligent parents, what horror and confusion will then seize you in that great and terrible day of the Lord, to hear such a charge from your children! but much more to hear God charge you with their blood, and say, "O unnatural wretches, behold how many precious souls you neglected and ruined, whose happiness you were bound to procure by so many ties of duty and affection: They were ignorant, and you instructed them not; they were prayerless, and you taught them not: they were Christless, and you pitied them not: yea, you not only neglected to give them good instructions, but you gave them bad example; you swore, lied, spoke obscenely, broke the Sabbath, mocked religion, &c. and lo, in these very practices they have followed you to hell, to be an addition to your torments there for ever."

Would you then prevent this sad reckoning, and be found with your children upon the Judge's right hand? see that you instruct them and pray for them. O fathers, would you wish to have your children well provided, then lay up a stock of prayer for them, both family and secret prayer: This is a stock that would not be soon spent, nay, it will be bringing them in something when you are dead and rotten. O mothers, your bodies travailed in pain at their first birth, let your souls travail in pain for their second birth: Where is your motherly tenderness towards the fruit of your womb? Would you not be sorry to hear them screeching, or see them frying in hell's flames, without remedy? Then do what lies in your power, to prevent it, by instructing them, praying for them, and praying with them

Thirdly. Beware of neglecting secret duties this day, such as were afore mentioned, and particularly prayer. If

thou be one, O sinner, that restrainest prayer before God this day, it is a black mark of a graceless heart; for a spirit of grace and supplication go still together. As difficulty of breathing, and painfulness in speaking, are symptoms of a sick body; so aversion to prayer is a sad sign of a sick soul: for prayer is the soul's breath and speech to God, Lam. iii. 16. Again, consider the danger of living in the neglect of this duty. "If Satan might have his wish against thee (saith one,) it would be this, that thou mightest lead a prayerless life; for then he is as sure of thee as a robber is of a traveller, whom he hast fast bound, lying in a ditch, and his mouth stopt that he cannot cry for help" O prayerless sinner, consider Satan has thee fast bound, and is just ready to murder thee; and wilt thou not cry to God for help? Moreover, think what a brutish thing it is to live prayerless, as alas many do; they rise like the beasts in the morning, they work with the beasts all day, and lie down like beasts at night, and never mind to look up to God, till he lay them on their backs upon a death-bed, and then they begin to cry like the beasts, when the knife is at their throat. Consider, O man, why God hath given thee a countenance erected towards heaven, and hath not made thee to creep on all four, as other creatures, with their backs to heaven and mouths to earth; but to teach thee, that thou art made to converse with thy Maker, and have intercourse with heaven, and that the world's husks are not fit food for thy soul. We would pity a poor man that was all bowed together, and forced to go like a beast upon hands and feet, with his eyes always to the earth: And is it not a more pitiful spectacle to see a soul that is a spark of heaven, created for communion with God, so crippled with ignorance and earthly mindedness, as still to be poring and grovelling upon the earth, without looking up to God its Maker and happiness?

Of Sins of Commission on the Lord's Day.

II. In the next place, I proceed to warn you against sins of commission, by which the Lord's day is too commonly profaned: And these are either inward or outward.

I. *Of inward Sins of Commission.*

Inward sins, or heart sins, should be carefully guarded

against this day, as being most provoking to God, polluting to his worship, and hurtful to our souls. Sinful thoughts are an abomination to God every day, Prov. xv. 26. but more especially this day. Thoughts are as loud in God's ears as words; and he commands evil thoughts to be forsaken, as well as evil ways, if we would have pardon, Isa. lv. 7. Wherefore let us get renewed and sanctified hearts, and overawe them with the thoughts of God's presence and omniscience: Let us imagine this day, that we hear the sound of the last trumpet, and see the throne set, and God calling for an account of hearts; (for in that day he will judge hearts as well as lives) and, when any evil thought breaks in, say, "What if God, who sees this, should presently call me to account!" Let us keep a constant watch over our hearts this day, striving to crush all sinful thoughts in the bud, at their first rising, cry out for God's help. Let us be sensible what a mass of villany is in the heart. "It is desperately wicked," as Jeremiah saith; yea, "our inward part is very wickedness," Psal. v. 9. Hence it was that Luther professed, that he "feared his heart more than the pope or the cardinal:" And Augustine prayed, "Libera me, Domine, a meipso." The heart is like the Trojan horse, out of whose belly proceeded armed enemies; so out of the heart proceed all evil words and actions, Matt. xv. 19. It is the corrupt fountain, from whence all the impure streams of actual sin do flow; therefore we should look narrowly to it.

But besides incident evil thoughts, we have many evil habits and plagues of heart, that we should guard against on the Sabbath, being such as profane the day, and hinder the sanctification of it: Particularly,

1. Atheism, and misbelief of God's truths. If this harbour or prevail in us, we can reap no profit by the word read or preached this day. Why do people delay or refuse to embrace Christ, and leave their sins, but because they want a fixed and firm impression of the truths of the gospel upon their hearts? It is true, you will not say that you misbelieve any of them, but you give no heart assent to the truth of them, which is little better; you give no firm inward credit to the gospel, and to all its assertions, commands, threatenings and promises, that they are come from God, and are most true, certain and infallible. Were

you once firmly persuaded of the certainty of eternal life and eternal death, you would not stand so long hovering betwixt heaven and hell. If once you had the firm impressions of eternal death, you would presently "flee from the wrath to come:" and if you had a due sense of eternal life, you would "run to take hold of the hope set before you," Heb. vi. 18. But alas! nature is half blind, and cannot see afar off, 2 Pet. i. 9. To carnal hearts and eyes, there seems to be a mist upon eternity; they cannot see into another world, and they cannot believe things not seen. But, O if you would be happy, you must stedfastly believe the "immortality of the soul, and a future life; that the Bible is the true word of God, and that the blessed God, sent his eternal Son Jesus Christ into the world to assume man's nature, and die for to redeem him from sin and hell." With abhorrence renounce all doubting or unbelieving thoughts of these great truths; rather doubt of your own being than of these: believe that what now you hear with your ears concerning a future life and judgment-seat, you will shortly see with your eyes: If you do it not, you put the highest affront on God that a creature is capable of; for you make your Creator a liar, 1 John v. 10. This is a sin that devils are not chargeable with, for "they believe and tremble." O sinner, what further confirmation of the truth wouldest thou have from God, than he hath already given thee? Thou hast his word, yea, his writ, ratified by his oath, confirmed by his miracles, and sealed by his Son's blood, which is far more, and far surer than either a voice from heaven, or a messenger from hell, according to 2 Pet. i. 19. Luke xvi. 31.

II. Ignorance of the truths you hear this day, greatly hinders the sanctification of it. You cannot prize Christ, close with him, or follow him, till such time as you know him. How can such hear the gospel, or embrace Christ offered therein, that know not their ruined natural condition, and their remedy through Christ? Many know not Christ's love and beauty, his ability, sufficiency and fitness, in his natures, offices, relations, graces, Spirit and fulness: they know not the design of his coming into the world; the manner of his obtaining our redemption by his obedience and sufferings, and the manner of applying it, and our getting an interest therein, and the necessity and nature of faith in

order thereto. For as oft as many have faith in their mouths, they know not what it is; they are ignorant what it is to receive Christ as a Surety and Saviour, as a Priest and King; and therefore many gospel sermons and Sabbaths are entirely lost to them.

O sinners, consider the danger of ignorance, it is a soul-murdering sin, Hos. iv. 6. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Do not think your ignorance will excuse you at a tribunal, or save you from hell: No, it will rather aggravate your sin and condemnation, to be found ignorant, in a land where the light shines so plentifully about you. Ignorance will be so far from keeping off wrath from you, that God tells you it is a special procuring cause of wrath, and makes you more miserable than others, according to Isaiah xxvii. 11. "This is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour."

Again, as ignorance is a damning sin in itself, so it is the fruitful mother of many other sins and lusts, according to 1 Pet i. 14. What is the reason why many swear, lie, cheat, break the Sabbath, get drunk, commit uncleanness, slight ordinances, neglect prayer in their families and closets, and go on in their sins, without repenting or fleeing to Christ? It is because of their ignorance: they are ignorant of God, his infinite justice and holy nature, the evil of sin, and what Christ hath suffered for sinners; they know not what regeneration, repentance and faith are, for all they speak of them; and how then can they practice them; or cry to God for them?

Object. "O (say some ignorant creatures) many have knowledge that make no good use of; yea, they are more graceless and profane than we."

Ans. All this is too true, and these will have a sad account to make one day for sinning against so much light. But this will be no help to you; for profanity kills them, and ignorance kills you: they die of one disease, and you die of another: and your disease is as sure to kill as theirs. For you to reject knowledge, because some who have it, abuse it and perish, is as ridiculous as for you to say, because many die who have both food and physic, and plenty of means for preserving life, I will use no means for

preserving my life at all; for whoever die, you are sure to die: they that have both food and physic may die, but they that have none of them cannot live. So, whoever perish, ignorant persons are sure to perish; for they know not their remedy, they cannot make use of the means of life. O ignorant souls, you are nearer hell than others; your state is darkness, and it borders upon utter darkness: so that you are, as it were, lodging in the next room to hell, having but a weak partition betwixt you and it, which death may break down in a moment. and let you pass into it. When an ignorant sinner dies, there goes not only dust to dust, but darkness to darkness; the darkness of ignorance to the darkness of hell: And is not this a fearful state for you to continue in? What madness is it for you to do it, when Christ is daily inviting you to come to the light?

O ignorant sinners, why should you continue in your ignorance, more than those of your rank in other places, who can discourse most sensibly of the principles of religion, and the concerns of their souls. and can pray to excellent purpose? Have you not rational souls as well as they? Have you not the same helps and advantages that they have, if you would but make use of them? Are you not as capable as they? You are as sharp and knowing about worldly affairs as others: You know well enough the rent of a piece of ground, the value of corn or cattle; but alas! you know nothing of the worth of your souls, of Christ and pardon to them: You are well versed in the art of ploughing, sowing and reaping, and know the right seasons for them; but, alas! you know not your seasons of mercy: You know your almanacs, the fairs, and changes of the moon, you know your story books and ballads; and why might you not know your Bibles as well, if you would employ the same parts and abilities to get spiritual knowledge? Have you not great plenty of the means of knowledge, if you would but attend to them, and make use of them?

Object. "But I cannot read the Bible, and how shall I learn knowledge?"

Ans. You are at a very great loss indeed; it is hard to get ignorant persons instructed that cannot read: You ought to lament your loss, and be the more in prayer for the Spirit of God to teach you, and make up that loss; and the more desirous to hear others read, and to wait upon the pub-

lic catechising: and also, lay out yourselves with all care yet to learn to read.

Object. "But I am too old to learn."

Ans. Are you too old to seek after Christ and salvation? Will your age save you from hell and wrath, if you die Christless? Will God spare old folk dying in ignorance, more than the young? Many have learned to read, who have been as old you; were you but willing and desirous, you would soon conquer all difficulties. I have heard of some servants who have been so fond to learn, that they have offered to their masters or mistresses to quit part of their meat and fee, upon condition they would teach them to read: And, are not your souls as dear to you as theirs were to them?

Object. "It was my parents' fault that did not teach me when I was young."

Ans. Alas! that parents should be so cruel to their children when young! But, wilt not thou be merciful to thyself, because they have been cruel? Their neglect will not excuse thine. As it was their fault that did not learn you in youth, so it is yours now if you remain in ignorance, and will be your eternal ruin if you continue wilfully so: yea, you will thus not only bring your own blood on your head, but also the blood of your children and servants when you get families; for you will not be capable to instruct them yourselves, nor will you, in all likelihood, be at pains to cause others to do it; and so you will be guilty of the same neglect to your children, that your parents were guilty of to you.

Object. "But I am ashamed to be learning at this age."

Ans. It is indeed a shame for old people to be ignorant, but no shame to learn: yea, though one foot were in the grave, and the other following, you should still be learning something for your soul. For, what is the world's shame and derision to that woful confusion of face that will befal the ignorant Christless sinner at a day of judgment, and especially such as slight knowledge, and will not be at pains to learn? Read that fearful and thundering threatening, Prov. i. 26, 27, 28. "I will laugh at your calamity, when distress and anguish cometh upon you; when ye call upon me, I will not answer; when ye seek me early, ye shall

not find me." O! these words threaten against the ignorant, who refuse to learn, "punishment without pity, misery without mercy, crying without comfort," and "torment without ease." O what is the cause, say you, of all that sad vengeance? See verse 29. "For that they hated knowledge," &c. As then you love your own souls, and would escape eternal damnation, as you would honour God and his Sabbath, see that you learn to read, seek instruction, and wait carefully upon all the means of knowledge.

III. Earthly-mindedness doth greatly hinder the sanctification of the Lord's day; for, when the vanities of the world are entertained, they so possess the mind, that there is no room left for other thoughts. The thoughts of the world shut out the thoughts of God: the dust and smoke of this world so blind the eyes of many, that they cannot discern the beauty of Christ or holiness, though the brightest discoveries be made thereof this day in the ordinances. Thus, alas! Satan defeats the whole design of the gospel as to many; so that though ministers tell them from God's word, of their soul's worth, hazard, and only refuge in Christ, yet they are so hot in pursuing the world, they do not hear or think on what is said. This man hath his farm, the other his merchandize, the other his trade, to look after, Luke xiv. 18. so that there is no time in their lives, no room in their hearts left for Christ. It is in vain to tell many of securing a mansion or inheritance in heaven; they must have houses and lands on earth. It is needless to tell them of providing for their souls; they have their families to provide for: or to tell them of heavenly manna to their souls; they must have bread to their mouths. It is to no purpose to tell them of a way to get justice satisfied, or the debt of sin paid; they must have their debts paid to their earthly creditors. It is in vain to press them to seek the favour and friendship of God; all their care is to get the countenance of this or the other man, that can do them kindness. And so, upon these worldly considerations, Christ the pearl of price is slighted, the precious soul neglected, and Sabbaths and sermons are quite lost.

Again, it is a gross profanation of this holy day, for people to allow themselves to think upon their trades and worldly commerce, when they are in God's house. As Christ whipped the buyers and sellers out of the temple when he

was on earth, so he will not suffer you to make the public assemblies of his people a place of merchandize, by thoughtfulness about worldly gain and profit. Your business in God's house this day is with the great God only, and therefore you must attend to nothing but his work and service: but if you indulge worldly thoughts, you will provoke God, and mar all your public performances.

Be not like Martha this day, "careful and troubled about many things," things that will not avail you at the dying hour, or through eternity; but imitate Mary this day, sit at Christ's feet. mind the one thing necessary, and choose the good part which shall not be taken from you.

Moreover, consider how dangerous this evil is to the salvation of your souls. It may be said of worldliness compared with other sins, as was said of Saul and David. when any one sin "kills its thousands, this slays its ten thousands:" O what havoc makes it in the visible church! What Pharaoh said of the Israelites, Exod. xiv. 3. may well be applied to many professed Christians; they are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. The world like bird-lime, clogs the soul's wings, that it cannot mount to heaven. Many, like Lot's wife, set out fairly for the Zoar of heaven; but their hearts hanker after the Sodom of this earth, which causeth them to look still back, till they perish in the way.

Again, consider what a vain and empty thing the world is, though obtained. It suits not the nature, nor satisfies the desires of the immortal soul: it decieves all its lovers, and in midst of sufficiency leaves them in straits; so that we ought rather to pity than envy a worldling, whose portion is so small, happiness so short, mistake so great, and misery eternal.

Think what folly it is to dig for dross with mattocks of gold, to bestow the precious affections of our souls on white and yellow clay. How monstrous is it to see a man with his head and heart where his feet should be! to see the world in the heart and on the throne, and Christ at the footstool! to see the world possessing God's room both week day and Sabbath day, and getting the service which is due to him alone! How many are there, who, even on the Sabbath day, worship the trinity of this world, mentioned 1 John ii. 16. more than the Trinity of heaven!

IV. Forgetfulness of God and Christ is a great evil, and greatly hinders Sabbath-sanctification. How can these sanctify the Sabbath who never mind the Author nor the end of it? And, alas! there are too many who have nothing of God in their thoughts, either Sabbath day or week day, Psal. x. 4. Though the heart be still thinking and hundreds of thoughts pass through it every hour of the day, yet God is in none of them. Strange! that every worldly trifle should find room in the heart, and God can find no place in it! What is the reason of this? You may see it, Rom. i. 28. "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Surely there is nothing in the world that we have so frequent *mementos* of, as of God: How can we look to the heavens, earth, flowers, or grass, without minding him? A very heathen could say, "Præsentem refert quælibet herba Deum." Or, how can we look to our bodies, but their curious structure should presently mind us of God? Yea, every time we breathe, every motion of our lungs, and beating of our pulse, should be a prick or spur to us to mind our Preserver; and in a special manner on the Sabbath day, every ordinance, every duty, every sentence, every word spoken by the minister, should mind us of God: But the matter is, the thoughts of God are burdensome to all that live careless and ungodly lives; they cannot think upon him, but they mind their judge.

But, O Christian, consider what a sin it is to forget God, especially on his own day. If we ought to spend every day in the fear of God, Prov. xxiii. 17. much more the Sabbath day. What ingratitude is it to forget him this day that minded us in our low estate, yea, minded us when we could not mind ourselves! The love of God in Christ should swallow up all our thoughts this day. When we seriously consider what Christ hath done for his people, one might think that Christ would never be one whole hour together out of their minds, but that they should carry him up and down in their thoughts and desires, that they should lie down with thoughts of Christ at night, and have him like a "bundle of myrrh lying all night betwixt their breasts," that is, in their hearts; and, when they awake, "they should be still with him;" that their very dreams in the night should be sweet visions of Christ, and all their words should savour of him.

V. Aversion to duty is another heart evil, that hinders the sanctification of the Sabbath. O how backward do we find our hearts to the duties of the Sabbath! how glad to put them by with any frivolus excuse! how unwilling to pay God a visit on his own day! We are slow to begin and in haste to make an end; we are heavy while the duty is a doing, and glad when it is done. Many are driven to their closets, as if they were going to the rack, or as if prayer were a penance rather than a privilege; they are constrained to it, to satisfy a natural conscience. It is rather a servile than a son-like performance. If conscience, like a taskmaster, did not lash them to their duty, they would never perform it. Many, they would rather toil their bodies whole days and weeks at the sorest labour, than spend one hour in secret upon their knees on the Lord's day. How sad and lamentable a thing is this! Is not God's company most desirable? is it not God's admirable condescension, and our highest honour, that such poor worms as we should be admitted into his presence? Are we not naturally desirous of acquaintance with great persons, and why so backward to acquaintance with the King of heaven? Is not the Sabbath a delight to God's people? and shall the work of it be a drudgery to us?

Object. "The duties requisite on this day are so many, they cost much difficulty and pains to perform them."

Ans. It is better to take pains, than suffer pains; better be bound with the cords of duty, than with the chains of darkness. The bonds of duty are not grievous; nay, they are our ornament and greatest freedom. Psal. cxix 45. whereas Satan and the world's service is the greatest drudgery; there is sin in the work, and hell in the wages. Alas, that many will be at no pains for that which will bring eternal glory, but are content to be at great pains for that which will cost eternal pains! The drunkard, thief, and adulterer, run many hazards to serve the devil, and win damnation; they suffer bodily pains, want sleep and rest, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. "They draw iniquity with cords, and sins as with cart ropes," Isa v. 18. They are yoked as it were, in the devil's plough or cart, and he makes them sweat and draw in his service. What bad work, sad wages, and a terrible master have they? Who would be hired by any wages to serve lions and tygers? Is not the

devil a roaring lion? and, will you serve him that will devour and tear his servants both soul and body, after they have served him never so faithfully? Oh! shall the devil's servants outstrip Christ's servants in diligence and activity? Is there any master like Christ? Is there any work or wages like his? Was there ever any of his servants a loser at his hands? Will not his experienced servants tell us, that "wisdom's ways are pleasantness," and that Sabbath-day's work is the sweetest recreation? Here they have the most pleasant walks, the most lightsome prospects, the choicest company, and the sweetest fellowship, Psal. xxiii. 2, 3. Psal. l. 23. There is heaven in holiness, and gain in godliness; no such gain or delight to be found elsewhere. Godliness is the most enriching trade in the world; God's people sometimes gain more by it on a Sabbath day in one hour, in one sermon, one promise, one prayer, one communion-table, one spiritual breathing, than all the rich men of the shire are worth, put all their estates together. The world will not believe this; but sure I am, one return of prayer, one smile of Christ's face, one look of faith, one grape of Canaan, one glimpse of the promised land, the head of one Goliah, the death of one lust, the strengthening of one grace, which may be obtained in the duties of the Sabbath; any of these is an abundant recompense for all the pains we can be at in God's service this day; they yield more sweetness and content to the soul, than all the pleasures the world can afford: The smallest gleanings of spiritual joy are better than a whole vintage of carnal delights.

But what is all that to the eternal weight of glory which is treasured up in heaven, for rewarding the laborious servants of Christ? What can we do for so vast a reward? Had the Lord said to us, unless you be content to spend your days in some howling wilderness, quit all worldly riches and pleasures, pine away with poverty and want, give the fruit of your bodies, suffer martyrdom, or take a dip in hell, you shall never see my face in glory; surely there is none that knows what it is to escape eternal misery, and inherit endless happiness above, but would have been willing to accept of these conditions. How much more then, when he only requires us to accept of his Son as our Surety, and love him, part with those sins that would damn us, and follow him in the pleasant ways of holiness; and to do all

this in his grace and strength. for he sends none a warfare on their own charges. Say not then, I have no strength for so many duties as are required upon the Sabbath. Is there not enough in Christ for thee? Look with an eye of faith to the power and promise of God in Christ, and every new duty will bring new strength with it; "they that do those things shall live in them."

VI. Hardness of heart hinders the sanctification of the Sabbath. Why? hard-hearted sinners can have no delight in Sabbath-work; they are not affected by the word; they cannot prize Christ offered in the gospel; they are not capable of receiving the gospel-comforts. O how many such do every Sabbath appear before God! who can sit and hear the most terrible threatenings of the word, and curses of the law denounced against sin, and the sins they are guilty of; and yet be no more concerned than the seats they sit on, or the dead that lie under their feet. Mercies or promises do not allure them, judgments or threatenings do not alarm them. This is a sad case, and yet very common, and few sensible of it. Who is complaining of this plague, of heart-hardness, and laying their case before God, saying, "Ah! what shall I do with this stone in my heart?" A stone in the bladder or kidney is a woeful pain, but the stone in the heart is much more dangerous and deadly; yet who is pained with that, and crying to the Physician of souls to take it away, and give a heart of flesh?

O hard-hearted sinner, consider thy miserable condition while thou remainest in a fallen state under wrath. Many a stroke has been given thee by the hammer of the word to no purpose; many of the Spirits motions hast thou resisted; many a knock hast thou despised. O tremble, lest God give thee over, and take no more pains on thee. A heathen Felix trembled; the devils tremble for fear of God's wrath; and will thy heart be unmoved? God calls you to flee from it, ministers call, mercies and promises call, judgments and threatenings call, the wounds and blood of Christ call; and will not thy heart be affected? "The voice of the Lord is powerful, full of majesty, breaketh the cedars, shaketh the wilderness, hath melted the hearts of thousands;" and yet cannot it break thy hard heart? Thou hast mountains of unpardoned guilt lying on thee, and hast thou no feeling thereof? Remember, if you be not brought

to feeling now, you shall be brought to it ere long, to your eternal cost and sorrow; if the word do not waken thy heart, it is likely death will. When you begin to draw by the curtain of flesh, and look into eternity, you will then cry, Lord, what will become of me for ever? If you do not awake, then to be sure the first moment of your entry into eternity will bring you to your senses; the bitings of the worm of conscience will then make you feel; the stream of fire and brimstone will melt the hardest heart; the hammer of justice will then break the heart, which the hammer of the word could not.

O then, beg of God, with the greatest earnestness, that he may give you "the broken heart and a contrite spirit," that so you may have that acceptable sacrifice to offer to him, which he never yet frowned upon, Psal. li. 17. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Augustine caused this text to be written over his bed when sick. Let us cry to God for it, who alone can give it. Gravel-stones men may remove, but heart-stones none can remove but God: We may as easily remove mountains as to do this; yet we must use the means: and therefore, "look to him whom you have pierced," that you may mourn. Think much on the free love of Christ, and the bloody sufferings your sins did put him to. If Christ's love and blood will not soften thy heart, nothing will. Beg the Spirit of God to come and make application of the blood of Christ, the blessed Scape-goat; and then the adamantine heart will dissolve. Cry, "Come, O Spirit of God, blow the fire of the word with thy own breath, and then it will melt hearts: take the hammer in thy own hand, and it will break rocks. Lord, wound and heal; do the work thoroughly and effectually; begin it, carry it on, and finish it: for if any of it be left for me to do, it will be eternally undone, and I will be lost for ever. Lord, complete this work, loose my bonds, thaw my affections, and draw my heart, and take eternal glory to thee."

VII. Hypocrisy and formality in duty is opposite to Sabbath-sanctification; for God requires heart-sincerity in every piece of worship and duty that we perform. Yet, O how many are there who give God no more but the outward man, and the service of the body! They "draw nigh to God with their lips" only; they pray so superficially, as if they were

unwilling that God should hear them, and take away that lust which conscience forces them to pray against. They are so careless and irreverent in secret prayer, they would be ashamed if any saw them, or overheard them. A statute on a tomb, with eyes and hands lifted up, offers as good service as many; only it wants a voice: And what signifies the voice without the affections? A parrot may be taught to repeat some few words of prayer, but none will call that a prayer; so neither will God own thy formal words for prayer. It is speaking, and not praying, when the heart is wanting; he looks upon thy worship as no better than a stage-play. Many worship God as carelessly as if they were "praying to an idol," that neither saw nor heard them: Nay, many heathens have worshipped their false gods, Jupiter and Mars, with greater seriousness and devotion than you do the great JEHOVAH, who made you and all the world. Why? the reason of all this is, all that many seek of religion is the name of it; and the outward form of it makes them pass under the name of good Christians among men. Though God see their hypocrisy, yet man knows it not; and that is enough to them. But, O hypocrite, consider the day is approaching when God will unmask thee before all the world. As Paul said to the high priest, Acts xxiii. 3. so may I say to thee, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall;" so as thy paint shall fall off, and thy inward rottenness appear to all. There will be no hiding of thyself among the crowd, no imposing on an all-seeing God. He can easily discern a traiterous Judas under a decietful kiss, a ravening wolf under a sheep's skin, a murdering Herod under a pretence of worship, a hypocritical Pharisee under a broad phylactory. He can spy a dissembling devil under a Samuel's mantle, or when he would shroud himself among the sons of God; for neither the sophistry of men or devils can blind his eyes.

Again, let the hypocrite think on his folly, in losing both his heaven here and hereafter, in drawing down upon him both the hatred of the world, and the hatred of the God of heaven. The world hates him for his show of religion, and God hates him for his hypocrisy in it. Is it not lamentable folly in hypocrites to do something for Christ, and go some length in the way to heaven, and yet to lose both Christ and heaven for not going one step further? To be like that

scribe, Matt. xii. 34. "not far from the kingdom of God," and yet never come thither? How sad is it to perish with heaven in view, and go to hell by the very gates of glory? The hypocrite's hope brings him to the shady valley, Job xvii. 14. but his candle goes out in that dark trance, and then he stumbles and falls for ever. It is sad to perish in the wilderness, when come to the very brink of Jordan, and in sight of the promised land; to make our voyage with a pleasant gale all the way, and shipwreck at the very mouth of the harbour; to come within a step of the gate, and die with our hands upon the threshold.

Lastly, Remember, as hypocrisy, if continued in, will certainly damn you; so it will provide a hotter hell for you than that of other sinners, Matt. xxiv. 51. therefore be wise in time, and study sincerity and uprightness of heart in all your dealings with God.

VIII. Wandering of heart greatly mars the performance of Sabbath duties, especially hearing, praying, and praising. Jewish rabbies say, "That though on the Sabbath there was much flesh used for sacrifice in the temple, yet not so much as one fly was seen stirring there." So neither should there be a wandering thought or eye allowed, when we are about God's solemn worship this day in his house. What encouragement hath a husbandman to sow upon a high way, where every man and beast has free passage? No better is the heart of a wandering hearer: we may as well cast seed upon the waves of the sea, as preach unto such; for the good seed of the word is quite lost upon them. Think what an affront it would be to a king, to turn your back to him, or discourse with others, while he is speaking to you. The motions and postures of your souls are as visible to God, as the motions and postures of your bodies are to one another. Or, if a criminal were allowed to petition his prince for his life, would he break off at every sentence, and chase flies through the room; you would say, a remission were ill bestowed upon such a creature. O beware of such a ridiculous behaviour before the King of heaven, when you are addressing him for the life of your condemned souls. Would you have God to hear you, when you do not hear yourself? Can you think he will be mindful of you, when you are not mindful of yourself? Think, if your prayers were written down, and all your vain thoughts interlined, what incoherent nonsense

would they be? Would you not be ashamed to hear them all read over? would not the world cry, "Shame upon you for mocking your dread Sovereign with such an impertinent address?" O but thoughts are the same as words with God; nay, they speak louder in his ears than words do in ours, Amos iv. 13. "He declares unto man what are his thoughts." And David says, "He tells my wanderings."

Wherefore, when you enter this day into the sanctuary, or into your closets, shut the door of your heart, so that worldly thoughts may not enter to trouble you. Lay solemn obligations and charges upon your hearts, that they wander not from God: bind the sacrifice with cords to the altar's horns; and if the birds of prey come by surprise down upon the sacrifice, then, like Abraham, Gen. xv. 11. "drive them presently away," and summon every thought to attend your main business. Retract every vain thought with a sigh, and chide with your hearts for vain excursions; check them as Christ did his drowsy disciples, What? cannot you watch with Christ for one hour? How then will you like to be engaged in heaven's work to all eternity, where there is no interruption?

Again, consider the uncertainty of your time for prayer. Had a criminal but a quarter of an hour allotted him to beg his life before an earthly judge, would he spend it in gazing upon the court and their fine clothes, or in asking some ridiculous questions? No, he would entreat and beg his life with all the arguments and fervency he were capable of. O sinner, when thou kneelest down to beg thy soul's life at the hands of the Judge of the quick and dead, thou knowest not if thou shalt have so long as a quarter of an hour for it; and wilt thou trifle it away! What if death surprise thee, and find thy heart wandering from God.

For remedying of this evil, besides what is said, study to overawe your hearts this day with a sense of God's presence and omnicient eye. A servant will not sport himself in his master's presence, but carry gravely. Did you believe that God's eye is still upon you, and notices all your thoughts, words, looks, and gestures; would you not be more circumspect than you are? May not angels, when they see what gravity and decency you observe in presence of a prince, and your carelessness and irreverence in presence of a glorious God, conclude you no better than infi-

dels in midst of God's house? Consider then how solemnly you should set yourselves in God's presence, when you attend public ordinances. It was the sense of this that made Barnard say, when he came to the church-door, "Stay here, all my earthly thoughts." But if they do thrust in after you, and come upon you to divert you this day, pretending necessary business, as Nehemiah's enemies did to him when about the temple work, then give them such a repulse as he did, Neh. vi. 3. "I am doing a great work, I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" And, like him, repeat this over and over, as they repeat their solicitations.

Again, get love to God and his ordinances; for what we love, that we fix our minds upon, be it gain, honours or pleasures. David found love to the word a good remedy against wandering thoughts in time of reading or hearing it, Psal. cxix. 113. "I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love." Also, study to accustom yourselves to holy thoughts at other times; for a vain heart out of duty, will be little better in duty. If your hearts be much set on the world at other times, your thoughts will be driving thither in time of duty, whether praying or hearing: But if they be habitually set upon Christ, then will your prayers ascend to him like a pillar of incense.

Moreover, be putting up frequent ejaculations unto God, to fix your hearts, and gather your straying thoughts. Pray with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart to fear thy name." Look to him that can stay "the raging waves of the sea," to stay the wandering thoughts of your heart.

Lastly, Consider how Jews and Heathens may put Christians to the blush in this matter. We read of surprising instances of their fixed devotion in their acts of worship. It is a strange constancy and fixedness that is spoken of the Jewish priests at Jerusalem, that when the Romans broke into the city, and rushed into the temple ready to kill them; yet they went on with the rites of the temple, as if there had been no such thing. Also, strange was the fixedness of that Spartan youth, that held the censer to Alexander while he offered sacrifice, who suffered a coal, that fell on his arm, to burn his flesh, rather than by crying, or letting fall the censer, he should disturb that worship. May not

these instances shame us, that have more light, for our unfixedness and inconstancy in the service of the great Jehovah?

IX. Wearying of the duties of the Sabbath is another evil we must guard against this day. O how many are there like those, Amos viii. 5. who say in their hearts, "When will the Sabbath be gone?" and with those, Mal. i. 13. "What a weariness is it?" Many weary as much of sermons, as if they were in the stocks all the while they attend them. O what would come of you, if Christ were as soon weary of calling, as you are of hearing! How many Sabbaths have you kept Christ standing and knocking at your doors, and he is not yet weary, for all your long deafness to his knocks, and refusing to open to him, but continues still to knock? O let this shame us out of our wearying to knock at God's door. Alas! a quarter of an hour in prayer wearies many of us. Is this the requital we give to Christ for all his love and patience? May not he say, "O believer, I did not soon weary of my bloody sweat in the garden for thee; nay, I was longer on the painful cross, than ever thou wast on thy knees in prayer, or meditating on my love and sufferings." O should a believer ever weary of that subject? Those idolators, Acts xix. 34. could "cry out with a loud voice for the space of two hours," and not weary in commending their idol Diana; and shall we weary of hearing a sermon in commendation of Christ, for the space of one hour? O where are these animal spirits that men have in worldly business? Where is that vigour and activity that many show in their bodily recreation, nay, in serving of their lusts? Many weary not to spend whole days and nights in drinking and gaming; but they grudge to give God one day for his worship, or so much as one hour of his own day. You weary not to provide for your bodies and present things; but soon weary to provide for your souls and eternity. You weary not to bestow time and pains to purchase a small estate; but you can spare no time nor pains to seek the kingdom of heaven. Many are quick enough about worldly things, but, like Dagon, they have no head to think, nor hands to act, when the ark is present. The Sabbath is a long and wearisome day to them. Some think both forenoon and afternoon of this day too much to be given to God; one of them may serve: Or they linger in coming to the

church in the morning, as being glad to have a part of God's day and worship driven by ere they come; and not a few steal away before worship be ended; they would rather spend the day any way than in God's service. O sinner, who is the loser by this, but thy own soul! Dost thou think a Sabbath long, a sermon long, a prayer long? How long then will it be to be banished from God's presence, and lie on beds of fire through a whole eternity? You will weary eternally there, but it will not mend you: The doors are not open there, as the church doors now are, to let you go in and out at your pleasure (as some graceless persons do in time of divine worship;) no, you will find hell's gates shut with invincible bolts, and mountains of brass rolled to them; and there you must dwell, and lie roaring, as prisoners of wrath for ever. Poor carnal wearying soul, canst thou ever think of going to heaven, to worship and adore God for ever without intermission, when so short a time of this work wearies thee now? To be sure, heaven would be a hell to thee in thy present unconverted state; thou wouldst give never so much to be out of it again, wert thou in it.

But, O believer, how ill doth it become thee to weary of Sabbath-work here below, that professest to be preparing for that everlasting Sabbath above, the work of which hath no end? Wilt thou weary to spend one whole Sabbath here in serving Christ, who wearies not to spend many whole Sabbaths and years in serving thee? Consider how busy Christ is this day in heaven in thy behalf: Though the Sabbath be a day of rest to us from our ordinary work, yet it is none to Christ; he is busy through the whole of it, pleading and making intercession for thee, without fainting in this work; and wilt thou so soon tire to act for him? Doth he mind thee so constantly, and wilt thou so soon weary to think on him?

X. Sleeping or drowsiness, in time of divine service, is a profanation of the Lord's day, and hinders our profiting by the ordinances. Therefore guard against it. Many are watchful enough about the devil's service; they can spend whole nights in drinking, gaming, &c. without sleep; but cannot hold up their eyes half an hour in hearing a sermon. Consider what an evil custom this is, you who are chargeable with it, and reform it. How ridiculous were it for a man that came to the market to buy provision for himself and his

family, to fall asleep in the market-place, and so miss his errand. Do you not come on the Sabbath, which is heaven's market day, to the ordinances to get provision for your souls? and will you fall asleep in the mean time of the market, and so go home empty? What do you know but, while you slept, that truth was delivered which might have saved your souls? Will a man fall asleep at his food? and yet you sleep while the bread of life is breaking to you, and the waters of life are running by you. How sad is it, that the soul's mouth should at this time be closed with drowsiness and sleep, that it cannot receive one crumb or drop? O how would a damned soul prize the opportunity that you sleep away! Remember it will not always last with you, the Sabbath and sermon will quickly come that will be your last; and who knows but this or the next may be it? If you thought you were going straight from the church to God's tribunal, would you not be more watchful in hearing? There is none can assure you but it may be so: but however that be, I can assure you, you must shortly answer for every sermon you are present at. God will ask, where are the fruits of so many sermons? It will be a fearful *item* in your accounts, *so many sermons slept away:* How will you answer for it?

Again, consider how provoking this practice is to God. Would not a prince be displeased with a subject, if he should fall asleep while he is speaking to him? Would not a judge be angry with a criminal, if he should sleep when he were about to pronounce his sentence? And have you not to do with the "King of kings," and 'Judge of the world,' while you are hearing the word? Is not your life at the stake when you are hearing it? According to that word in Deut. xxxii. 46, 47. "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day: for it is not a vain thing for you: because it is your life." Remember what befel Eutychus when he slept in time of sermon, Acts xx. it almost cost him his life: God made him a monument of displeasure, for a warning to all sleepers: He got a sad fall, but you may get a worse; he fell to the ground, but you may fall to the lowest hell, and there you will not get a Paul to take you up as he got. Your sin is more aggravated than his: it was mid-night when he slept, but you sleep at mid-day: Paul had preached several hours, but half an hour

and less puts you asleep. You have cause to fear, lest God make you a monument of his wrath, or that he say, Sleep on, till the flames of hell awake you. It is truly a wonder how any can sleep at the worship of God, either in the church or family, and not dream of hell-fire in their sleep; for their danger is greater than they are aware of; Satan is very busy at such a time: while you sleep, he successfully sows his tares, Matt. xiii. 25. your sleeping time is a seed time for the devil, and a spring time for lusts.

If you would remedy this evil, strive and wrestle against it, and pray for help to do it; go timeously to bed on Saturday's night, and see that you be temperate through the week; for they that wake much in the ale-house, will be fair to sleep in the church.

XI. Prejudice at preachers, and quarrelling with them for their plainness and freedom, in reproving sin, mars the sanctification of the Sabbath, and your getting good by the ordinances. Some hear ministers, as the Pharisees heard Christ, with ill-will to them, and a design to catch advantage against them; they "would make a man an offender for a word." Others are so fast asleep in sin, that they cannot endure ministers to thunder in their ears, or lighten in their eyes by plain and piercing sermons, because they disturb their rest. Asa was "wroth with the seer" upon this account, and "put him in prison;" so dealt Herod with John, and Ahab with Micaiah. Many, like Ahab, think the minister has a pique at them, when he reproves sin freely: "He never speaks good of me," saith Ahab. O sinner, this is the wrong way; for when God wounds thy sin, and darts conviction into thy soul, thou shouldst thank the Spirit of God for his merciful visiting of thee, and lay open your lusts, and say, "Smite, Lord, with a deadly blow those enemies that would not have thee to rule over them; kill my lusts, and save my soul. Blest Physician wound and heal; cause these convictions to end in my conversion here, and salvation hereafter." An honest heart loves the sermon best that wounds his lusts deepest. He says to the word, or the minister, that stops his career in sin, as David to Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thy advice," &c. If your eyes were opened, you would

look on plain rousing preachers as your best friends in the world. If you were in hazard of burning or drowning by falling into the fire or water, would you be angry with one that would pull you out, and save your life, though he should wound you, or break an arm of you in the doing of it? Nay, you would think him your friend, and thank him for his kindness. And will you be angry with a minister for plucking you as a brand out of the burning, by denouncing wrath against sin, and telling your hazard in plain language?

XII. Slighting the offers of the gospel, and Christ tendered to us therein, is a great profanation of the Lord's day, and directly opposite to the design of it; yet alas! it is a most prevailing evil among us. Christ calls, but we will not hear; he offers himself and his purchase, but we will not accept; he allures us with his mercy, but we will not turn to him; he oft waters us with the dew and rain of gospel ordinances, but little fruit follows: we are like the barren field, on which most cost is bestowed, but the crop is nothing answerable. How many Sabbaths are spent, and sermons preached, and no good done? At one sermon of Peter's, there were three thousand souls converted: But, alas! we fear there are three thousand sermons preached now, and not one soul brought in. Many times is the gospel net let down in vain: O that Christ would come and direct it to be let down on the right side of the ship! I shall endeavour briefly to lay before you the great sin and misery of rejecting Christ and the gospel offers.

1. It is against reason to refuse a remedy when in our offer: as for a wounded man to slight a physician, or a condemned man a pardon. none in his right wits would be guilty of this: nay, it is even self-murder; for he is as guilty of his own death that rejects a medicine, or tears a plaister from off his wounds, as he that cuts his own throat. Now, you know what a heinous sin self-murder is; yea, this is not only so, but it is soul-murder, which has a louder cry than any other murder, by so much as the soul is more precious than the body: You are afraid to shed the blood of others, O do not embrue your hands in the blood of your own souls.

2. It is the greatest affront and indignity that can be offered to the majesty of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. It is even called a "treading under foot the Son of God, and

his precious blood," Heb. x. 28, 29. which is there reckoned a greater sin than the breach of all the ten commands; it is a sin which neither heathens nor devils are guilty of. To "tread upon the Son of God," O monstrous guilt! who would be guilty of this? May you say, "Am I a dog (as Hazael said to the prophet) that I should do this thing?" Yea, every soul that slights Christ and his gospel-offers, doth it. How provoking must it be, to trample on God's most precious Jewel, wherein he is highly delighted and well pleased, Matt. iii. 18. to loathe that which is most sweet unto God? What horrid ingratitude is it, to slight the remedy that the infinitely wise God hath been at so much pains and expences in preparing for us, and which hath cost him more than the creating of ten thousand worlds would have done! A work upon which his heart is so set, and wherein he hath so displayed his glorious attributes and perfections; yea a work which he prefers to all his other works: How criminal must it be to undervalue that? Again, what a slight must it be to the divine Majesty, to prefer the devil and lusts before him? When Satan and lusts knock, they presently find access; yea, the least whisper they make is harkened to: But though Christ cry aloud, and lift up his voice like a trumpet in the gospel offers; yea, though he call, entreat, beseech, and complain, he is disregarded, and finds shut doors. "What iniquity (may Christ say) do you find in me, that the devil and lusts should be preferred before me? Can they do for you what I can do? "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise?"

3. Refusing Christ as offered in the gospel, is the great condemning sin of the world, see John iii. 19. 36. Heb. iii. 19. The ruin of sinners under the gospel, is laid at the door of this sin, as if there were none other charged upon them: and justly it is so; for if a malefactor were offered his life upon his kneeling and accepting the king's remission, if he refused to do this, it may well be said, that his refusal hangs him. O sinner, no other sin in the world, however great it be, would condemn you, if you were not guilty of this sin of slighting Christ: But this is the sin which binds the guilt of all your other sins hard aud fast upon you; yea, it is the sin that binds up the hands of Omnipotency, that it cannot save you. Christ's merits, though infinite, cannot justify you, if you reject them; for the best

medicine that ever was compounded cannot heal, unless it be applied.

4. Unbelief and slighting of Christ, tends to defeat the whole design of the gospel, and to render Christ's whole undertaking useless: For, what is it but a saying on the matter, You have no need of him; and his death was to no purpose? May not Christ look with a grieved heart upon unbelieving sinners, and say, "I have gone a long journey, shed my precious blood, and suffered the pains of hell, to save sinners: but these say on the matter, I might have staid in heaven; I might have kept my blood in my veins; or, I died as a fool dieth: They give me no thanks for all my pains." O sinners, consider what you are doing; would you go about to frustrate Christ's glorious expedition, or give him cause to repent of his death and bloody agony?

5. This sin brings on inevitable wrath and misery. Heb. ii. 3. As Christ hath cords of love, so he hath a rod of iron; if you break his cords, he will take his rod: If mercy manage it, it will but wound you; but if justice take it, it will grind you to powder. O provoke not the Mediator to take his iron rod; for his vengeance is heavy. Though he be the meek "Lamb of God," and be clad with priestly garments, yet he hath "feet like brass, as if they burned in a furnace," both heavy and hot to trample on his enemies, Lev. i. 13. 15. If you refuse Christ, your misery is as inevitable as that of the devils: For they perish, because they have no Mediator; and you perish, because you will not have a Mediator. O why will you put yourselves in the same case with devils? Nay, your case, in some respects will be worse than theirs; for they never rejected a remedy. The most scorching corners in the fiery oven of God's wrath seems to be reserved for unbelievers, Luke xii. 46. The breath of his mouth, that before invited them, will eternally blow their fire, Isa. xxx. 35. Mercy itself will be incensed, and plead against them at the great day. You will be more inexcusable than the heathens: They will have something to say for themselves, "We never had an offer of Christ, we never once heard of him;" but what can you say for yourselves, who have had so many thousand offers, and so many knocks and calls every Sabbath to accept of Christ. You must surely stand speechless: there remains nothing for you but a "fearful looking for of judg-

ment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries:" Yea, "it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than it will be for you," Matt. xi. 22, 23. The sins of Sodom were so monstrous, that they made a hell upon earth. O what punishment must they have now, when the beginnings of it in this world were so terrible? If the punishment of the least sin will be intolerable in that lake, O what will the punishment of the Sodomites' horrid and unnatural sins be? Yet their case will be easy, in respect of them that have slighted the gospel: These will even gnash their teeth for envy of the happiness of a damned Sodomite. Nay, O gospel slighter, you will then wish a thousand times you had rather been living in Sodom, when fire and brimstone was rained from heaven on it, than have lived in Scotland, where manna was rained, and the light shined so abundantly.

So much for inward sins.

Of outward Sins of commission on the Lord's Day.

II. I come, in the next place, to caution you against outward sins, whereby the Lord's day is too commonly profaned.

I. Beware of the sins of the tongue: It is a most essential part of true religion, to govern the tongue aright: For, "if any man seem to be religious (saith James) and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain." The tongue is a most unruly thing; and therefore the Psalmist treats it, as he would do an unreasonable beast. Psal. xxxix. 1. "He keeps it in as with a bridle." God hath set a double hedge about this unruly member, both of the teeth and lips (to shew with what care we should keep it) and yet how oft doth it break loose, notwithstanding of both? God hath also placed it betwixt the brain and the heart, that it might take counsel of both; and yet how oft doth it act, without advising with either the one or the other? God hath given us two ears, and but one tongue: to teach us to hear much and speak little. "Be swift to hear, and slow to speak," James i. 19. for "he that refraineth his lips is wise," Prov, x. 19. Often have we cause to repent our speaking, but seldom our silence.

As we ought to watch our tongues every day, so especially on the Lord's day; for on this day we are forbid to "speak our own words," Isa. lviii. 13. Not only must we this day abstain from lying, swearing, reproaching, backbiting, &c. but also from all idle words, yea, from all such discourse as is unsuitable to the work of this day, though it might be lawful on other days. The hearts of men may be very much known by their Sabbath-day's discourse; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." We guess by people's language what country they belong to. Is thy speech vain and worldly upon the Lord's day? It is a shrewd sign of a carnal unrenewed heart; "Thou art a Galilean, thy speech betrayeth thee." This is God's holy day, and he will have it sanctified by our whole man, and by our words as well as our actions: "Set a watch then this day before your mouth, and keep the door of your lips," and strive to "season your speech with grace:" for you may profane the Sabbath by your words as well as by your works, and by vain as well as by vile words. O then, what cause have we to lament the profanation of the Sabbath by vain and idle discourses, which is so common among us? If Christ should join himself to many this day, in their coming to and going from the church, as he did the two disciples going to Emmaus on this day, Luke xxiv. 15. 17. and ask, "What manner of communications are these which you have one with another?" might not this question strike us speechless, and make us blush? Who can tell what day this is by many people's discourses? Jests, stories and idle talk, are as common with them this day as any other. It was Plato's proposal, "That men's speeches at their meetings and tables should be written." If this were practised on the Sabbath, would it not put many to shame, to read over their words before them? But though men do not register them, yet, remember, God doeth it, especially on his own day, which he hath so much honoured. He has a book of remembrance to write down all that men say, as well as what they do, Mal. iii. 16. See what he saith, Matt. xi. 36. that scripture may cause us all to tremble, and take heed to our words while we have a day to live; "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment." O what long counts will many have to clear for idle words on the Sab-

bath, besides on other days! And if they must account for idle words, how much more for ill and sinful words, for base lies, and bloody oaths? O the tongue is a world of iniquity? How shall we answer for it at God's bar, without timeous repentance, and fleeing to Christ for mercy? If you would have your tongues renewed, and to become as choice silver, to speak the language of Canaan on the Lord's day, then see to get sanctified hearts: Cleanse the fountain, that the streams may run clear; "wash your heart from wickedness, and let not vain thoughts lodge within you," Jer. iv. 14. Shut out vain thoughts, as well as vile thoughts: And, if they break in upon you this day, do as the ravished virgin under the law, cry out to God for help, and you shall not be held guilty.

Secondly, There are sins in action, whereby the Sabbath is frequently profaned by many.

1. Many encroach upon the Lord's holy day, and profane it by worldly diversions and recreations, and by seeking their pleasures in the fields, which I have handled already at some length. Others profane this holy day by making it a day of idleness, or a visiting day among their friends and neighbours: Others by making it a reckoning day with workmen and servants: And many profane it by doing unnecessary servile work in and about their houses, which might either be done on the Saturday before, or delayed till Monday thereafter; such as the gathering peas, shearing of grass, cutting and shearing of kail, fetching in water, sweeping the house, drying of clothes, brewing of ale, and the like. These things not being works of necessity or mercy, but our own works, done for our worldly profit, or to indulge our carnal ease or pleasure, are certainly unlawful on the Sabbath, according to Isa. lviii. 13. yet, alas! how is the Lord's day profaned by these practices in some places of the land? Let ministers do and say what they will, still many will be stealing a part of God's day for their servile work; and it cannot but be heinous and provoking in the sight of God, being done against so much light and so manifold reproofs.

Object. "Why do you exclaim so against us on this account? we do no harm to any; we thank God we are not thieves, extortioners, drunkards," &c.

Ans. Nay, you are thieves, for you rob God, and steal from him that which is his proper right, for "the seventh day is the Lord's." You would be ashamed to be found stealing any of your neighbour's goods, and think you no shame to be found robbing God of his holy day? Is not sacrilege the worst kind of theft, stealing from God worse than stealing from man, the sins against the first table greater than the sins against the second table? Besides, they that begin thus to steal from God, may, ere all be done, come to steal from men too; for false to God, true to no man. Many a thief at the gibbet hath confessed, that he began his loose life and stealing, with breaking of the Sabbath day; that this was his leading sin, and the occasion of all the rest.

Object. "We are not singular, we do but what our neighbours and others about us do."

Ans. You ought to be singular, and do more for God and your souls than others, if you would "enter in at the strait gate." God forbids you to "follow a multitude to do evil," Exod. xxiii. 2. The commonness of a sin doth not extenuate but aggravate it in the sight of God; for, the more common it be, it hath the louder cry in his ears for vengeance. God hath common plagues for common sins in this world, and a common hell for common sinners in the world to come. Think not that your association with others will anywise alleviate your torments in that lake below; nay, it will rather heighten them: for the more faggots are thrown into a fire, it will burn the more vehemently.

Object. "These things which we do are but little trifles, soon done, and do not hinder God's service on the Sabbath."

Ans. 1. Was not gathering a few sticks on the Sabbath as little? yet we see how highly God resented it. Think no sin small which is committed against an eternal God, and his holy law. There is more evil in the least sin, than all the angels in heaven, or ten thousand worlds, can expiate; and, if the guilt or punishment due to it were laid upon thee, it would make thee gnash thy teeth eternally, and curse the day that ever thou wast born: Nothing less than the death of the eternal Son of God can make atonement for the least sin. Believe it then, that lesser sins, if known and reserved, will carry thee to hell as surely as greater

sins; for, the less the sin be, the less temptation hast thou to commit it, and the less excuse for it. A small leak in a ship, kept open, will sink her, as well as a greater; a stab with a pen-knife will kill a man as well as a sword If thou allowest Satan but the smallest grip of thy soul, he will pull thee to hell by it, even as a butcher can drag a beast to the shambles by one foot, as well as when bound by all four: And, if Satan get thee to hell, he doth not much care by what sins thou goest thither, whether small or great.

2. God hath framed all his commands in infinite wisdom, and he best knows what is consistent with his own worship, and what is most for his own glory. It is presumption in any man to say, that this or that piece of our work on the Sabbath will be no hindrance to the service of God, seeing he himself hath said, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work." The Israelites must not gather manna this day, Exod. xvi. O might some have said, "Why? it will not hinder God's service; we gather it early in the morning, and so we will be at God's worship in time enough, and have all the rest of the day to serve him: Again, we need not travel for it; it lies round about the camp, and near our very doors; it will be no great labour: and besides, we may have good thoughts in time of doing it." No, you must not be wiser than God; he hath set apart this day for his own use, and you must not cut and carve upon it.

In like manner, some excuse their walking or travelling upon the Lord's day: "O (say they) we can employ our thoughts profitably by the way." But, though you could do it, pray, can you undertake that your example shall have no ill effect upon others who are looking on you? What think you of that awful word, Matt. v. 19. "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so (that is, shall make others break it by what he doth or saith) he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven?"

3. Vanity and gaudiness of apparel is opposite to the sanctification of the Sabbath. Some dress up themselves this day in such vain attire, and indecent fashions, as tend to draw the eyes of others to gaze upon them, and so their

hearts to wander from God and his worship. Think what guilt you hereby draw upon yourselves, of the sins of others as well as your own. The practices of some heathens may put many professed christians among us to the blush. Valerius Maximus tells of a heathen young man, named Sparina who was exceeding beautiful; but observing that many fixed their eyes on him, and fearing the consequences of it, he disfigured his face, lest his beauty should prove a snare to others. May not this heathen condemn such, who are so far from disfiguring themselves, lest they should prove a temptation to others, that they disfigure their faces by painting and patching, to seem more beautiful than God has made them, without fearing whatever the consequences of it may prove. Is not this a showing a dislike of God's workmanship, and a desire to mend it? Jezebel was infamous for this art, and no sober woman should desire to follow her fashion. A Christian should be so far from being proud or vain of his apparel, that the sight of his garments should humble him, and keep him in mind how he came to need them; Was it not sin that stript man of his glory, covered him with shame, and put him to seek clothes to hide it? Would it not be distraction in a malefactor to pride himself in a stigma which he had got for a foul crime! Consider also the garments you are proud of, what they are? The beasts have the same naturally to cover them, and will you be proud of a beast's covering? It was the saying of a heathen to a vain gallant, "Why art thou proud of that which a sheep wore before thee?" Or, what though they be finer than wool! yet their original is no better, but rather worse: What are velvets, silks and satins, but the excrements of a vile worm? and is that a matter to be vain of? Remember, that ere long God will cause thee to wear another suit thou wilt have small reason to be proud of; he will even clothe thee with worms and putrefaction. May not the thoughts hereof keep you humble, and teach you to come to the church gravely and decently apparelled? especially since you come into the presence of that God who resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

4. The institution of holidays is an encroachment upon the fourth command, and opposite to the sanctification of the Sabbath, which is the only day now appointed to be kept holy to God. What is it, but an usurping of Christ's

legislative power, and a vilifying of the Lord's day, to set saints' days, or days of human institution, on a level with it, by obliging people to abstain from labour thereupon. The church hath no power to consecrate such days: nay, the apostles did it not: there is no word of their consecrating a day to Stephen the proto-martyr, nor to James whom Herod killed with the sword. Yea, it may be reckoned an idolatrous practice to consecrate days to saints and angels, and keep them to their honour for publishing their praise, and commemorating their acts, since this is a piece of worship that belongs only to God.

Lastly, Not a few in some parts of the country do profane this holy day, by their set cabals and drinking-meetings upon it, by reading profane books, and telling profane stories, by scoffing at religion and religious persons, and by many other acts of wickedness. Alas! what hellish madness is this, that some are given up to! It is even a riding post to hell, a dedicating God's holy day to the honour and service of the devil, a hanging out a flag of defiance against heaven, and declaring war against your Maker. It is the saying of one, "To keep the Sabbath in an idle manner, is to keep the Sabbath of oxen or asses; to keep the Sabbath in diversions and pleasures, is to keep the Sabbath of the golden calf. But to keep the Sabbath in drunkenness and lewdness, is the Sabbath of Satan, or the devil's holy day." O profane sinners, what a dreadful mark of wickedness is it, to dedicate God's day to the devil! You cannot possibly offer a greater affront and indignity to the God of heaven, than to serve the devil in the works of darkness, upon that very day which is solemnly dedicated to the honour and service of the great God. And, can you think that a jealous God will pass such an indignity, and take no notice of it? "Do ye thus provoke the Lord to jealousy? are ye stronger than he?" Will you fight against him that made heaven and earth with a word, and by a word can unhinge them again; yea, by the breath of his mouth can crumble you to dust? What are you in his sight, but as a handful of silly worms? and do you think to be able to wage war against the Almighty? No, no; be the combination never so strong, the rebels never so stout, the enemies never so numerous, he is fully able to master them, and will certainly do it, Prov. xi. 21. "Though hand join in hand, yet the

wicked shall not be unpunished." O what cause have we to pity and pray for such heaven-daring sinners, and weep in secret places for their souls, who wifully destroy themselves, and pour contempt on their Maker; who live as if either there were no hell, or were afraid it should be full ere they got thither; and who seem to long to be companions of devils, and damned spirits! The God of infinite mercy open the eyes and stop the career of such, before they be beyond the reach of mercy.

And, before I close, let me ask the breakers of the Sabbath, What they will answer to the Author of the Sabbath, for despising and abusing such a rare privilege as the Sabbath is? When the Lord calls you poor sinful creatures, who deserve to be banished eternally from his presence, to come and enter into his rest, and refresh your souls with the view of his redeeming love, and enrich them with the treasures of his grace set open before you: O what a sin must it be for you to turn your back upon them, and go about to weary the Lord by your sins, when he offers sweet rest to you! O believe it, sirs, Sabbath breaking is not such a light sin as many imagine; surely the day is very near when you shall be brought to think on these days you now mispend and make light of. O how will you then mourn for the loss of these precious Sabbaths which God gave you to find peace and rest to your souls in, when you shall have no rest night nor day, but the smoke of your burning and torment shall ascend for ever and ever! How will you mourn then to see Abraham's bosom afar off, and thousands at rest in it whom you hated, and where you might have been at rest as well as they, if you had not despised the rest of the Sabbath here below! It is said, Lam. i. 7. "Jerusalem remembered, in the days of her miseries, all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old: then the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her Sabbaths." So the days of your miseries approach. O Sabbath-breakers, when with sad hearts ye shall remember the pleasant ordinances and seasons of grace you had of old; and then the devils and heathens will mock at you for the loss of your Sabbaths! Why then should you go to add to the sins and miseries of your eternal state, the heinous guilt of abusing such a great number of precious Sabbaths as God in his mercy now affords you for the saving of your souls!

AN EXHORTATION

TO SANCTIFY THE LORD'S DAY.

I SHALL conclude this subject with a serious exhortation to all ranks, strictly to observe the Lord's day. Read and consider what hath already been said, and you will find many arguments for pressing this exhortation: Nay, this is the scope of all that hath been said. But, that you may the more effectually be convinced of the excellency and necessity of this duty, I shall further subjoin these few motives.

I. The strict observation of the Sabbath is the most effectual mean for preventing atheism and profaneness, in regard that, by the frequent recurring thereof, the remembrance of Christ and heaven is still kept up, and sin and vice are kept under constant rebukes and disgrace. If it were not for the observation of the Sabbath, atheism and irreligion would quickly overspread the world: And there is nothing tends more to harden the heart, sear the conscience, and give loose reins to scandalous sins and outbreakings, than the profanation of the Sabbath. This (as has been said,) many malefactors at gibbets have confessed to have been the first beginning of their loose lives, and that which paved the way to their other wicked courses, and provoked God to leave them to fall into these heinous crimes which brought them to such fatal ends.

II. God's great goodness and gracious design in allowing you the Sabbath, lays you under strong obligations to keep it conscientiously: He gives it not for a penance but a privilege. It is not that he may get advantage from you, but that he may give blessings to you. He hath not commanded the business of the world to cease every seventh day, because he is tired with governing the same, or to take any ease to himself; but it is that he may give rest to your bodies, and heavenly refreshment to your souls. Would you have Christ and the riches of his grace? Would you have your souls nourished, and weak graces repaired: Then keep the Sabbath, for it is God's weekly market-day; and a free market it is, wherein we may "buy, without money and without price," the richest commodities that heaven

and earth can afford, even the bread and water of life for the lives of our souls, the wine of Christ's blood to cheer us, the milk of his word to nourish us, the gold of his grace to enrich us, his precious eye-salve to enlighten us, and his white raiment to clothe and adorn us. Is this day so profitable to us, and will we not regard it?. It is the soul's festival, a day of reaping and ingathering, and of laying up in store for the time to come. It is God's stated alms day. or public deal day, wherein he scatters blessings and crumbs of the bread of life among needy souls. It is the queen of days. the dawning of glory, and day-break of heaven. It is the day for ascending mount Tabor, to see Christ transfigured before our eyes: and for getting to the top of Pisgah, to get a sight of the promised land. O then! what horrid ingratitude must it be to a good God to profane this blessed day, and slight God's unspeakable kindness, in allowing it to us for our souls-advantage?

III. The strict observation of the Sabbath, is an excellent mean to sweeten both the thoughts of death and heaven to us. 1. As for death, a retiring from the world once a week will prepare us to welcome our final removal from it the more cheerfully. But they who think it hard to leave their worldly concerns for a day to worship God, when they expect to return to them on the morrow; what a hard pull must it be for them to part with them altogether at death, never more to come back to them? And this we must all shortly do, whether we will or no: but to a conscientious keeper of the Sabbath, the parting with the world will not be such a hard task. 2 It will also sweeten the thoughts of heaven to us; for the work and comforts of the Sabbath below are the foretastes of the employments and enjoyments of the everlasting Sabbath above; and they who delight in the Sabbaths upon earth (which are the days of heaven, and typical resemblances of it) cannot but rejoice in the forethoughts of celebrating the eternal Sabbath above, in the immediate fruition of God's presence, and beholding him as he is for evermore. But the thoughts of heaven can be nowise pleasant to a Sabbath-breaker: yea, it would be an uneasy prison to him: For, if it be a penance to him to be a few days in God's worship now, what a punishment would it be to him to be engaged in this work for ever?

IV. Consider who it is that requires you to sanctify the Sabbath, even that good and gracious God who giveth you all things richly to enjoy; that God who giveth you your being, your breath, your health, your food, and all earthly comforts. O how bountiful is he to the sons of men! he gives you the sun in the heavens to shine upon your bodies, and the Son of his love to die for your souls. He allows you six days for your profit and pleasure, he reserves one for his glory and service; and will you not frankly give him his one day, when he is so liberal to you? Say then to your vain companions, when they would tempt you to profane the Lord's day, as Joseph said to Potiphar's wife when she tempted him to sin, Gen. xxxix 9. "My master hath not kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" So say you, God, the Soveriegn Lord and Master of the world, hath kept back no time from me, but one day, because it was his; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

V. A conscientious keeping of the Sabbath, disposeth the soul the more for the service of God all the week over. If your soul be in a good frame on the Sabbath, it will prosper the better all the week for it; your conscience will be the more tender, your thoughts the more spiritual, and your affections the more lively. If you be in the mount with God on the Sabbath, the face of your conversation will be fair to shine in holiness through the week.

VI. Our regard to the Sabbath is a trying test of the state and frame of our souls, whether we be spiritual or carnal, love God or the world most. It tries also the condition of our graces, whether they be waxing or waning, in a prosperous or decaying state. Hence God frequently calls the Sabbath a "sign betwixt him and his people," Exod. xxxi. 17. Ezek. xx. 12. 20. And indeed our conscientious keeping and sanctifying of the Sabbath is a sign to us several ways:

1. It is a sign of God's sanctifying our hearts, and an evidence of a good work wrought in us by the Holy Spirit.

2. It is a clear sign to distinguish us from the unsanctified and profane of the world.

3. It is a sign of our having a conscientious regard to all the other commands of God; and all observing persons will

find this sign to hold in their daily experience. If you keep not this command of sanctifying the Sabbath, it is a sign you will little regard all the rest. If you serve not God on his own day, you will make little conscience of serving him on the following days of the week; but on the contrary, if you worship God sincerely on the Sabbath, and regard this holy day, it is a token you will regard all other duties of religion. Let us observe these very noticeable words of God, Jer. xvii. 24. 26. "If ye hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall they come from the cities of Judah, and all other places, bringing burnt-offerings, meat offerings, incense, and sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the Lord:" that is, the Church of God and true religion shall flourish, and the name of the Most High be exalted in the world. And, indeed, for my part, I despair ever of seeing Christianity and reformation considerably advanced in the world, till once the Lord's day come to be highly esteemed, and strictly observed: for still it is to be seen, wherever religion flourisheth in the power of it, there it is that most conscience is made in the observation of the Sabbath.

4. The conscientious keeping of the Sabbath is a sign betwixt God and his people, in respect it is a token of a good understanding and correspondence betwixt him and them, that controversies are removed, and peace and friendship maintained. To whom is it that God manifests most of his gracious presence, and the emanations of his special love? Surely it is to those who have the Lord's day highest in esteem, and who are the most strict and careful observers of it. Upon all which accounts, *lastly*, The Spirit of God makes this duty a sign and character of the blessed man: For, Isa. lvi. 2. (speaking with a special eye to the New Testament times) he saith, "Blessed is the man that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it."

O Christians, would you be blessed indeed? then sanctify the Lord's day, by sincerely worshipping your Creator, who this day made light first to shine; and honouring your Redeemer, who this day arose from the grave, and completed the work of your redemption. As the angel said to the woman that came to the sepulchre, Matt. xxviii. 6. "He is not here, he is risen, as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay:" So say I to every true lover of Christ,

"He is not here, he is risen; come, observe the time when the Lord rose." Observe it is to his honour and praise, and he will surely bless you, and make you glad with the light of his countenance. There was never any who truly observed this command, but will say, that rare and blessed are the fruits which are to be reaped from this blessed duty.

Would ye then share of these fruits, and please God in keeping his Sabbath? Then take the following advices: (1.) Remember to honour and glorify God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, upon this holy day, by ascribing to each Person of the blessed Trinity, the glory of his proper work. As, 1. Ascribe to the Father the glory of his power, wisdom and goodness, in creating the world for our accommodation, and contriving our recovery when we had lost ourselves, and, for an example to us, resting on the Sabbath after he had reviewed his work with delight. 2. We ought to glorify the Son this day by ascribing to him the honour of undertaking and carrying on the work of our redemption, by his incarnation and death, and by his rising from the dead on the third day, now set apart for the Lord's Sabbath. 3. We are to glorify the Holy Ghost, by ascribing to him the honour of applying the purchased redemption to believers, in his work of regeneration and sanctification, which he began in a glorious manner by that wonderful effusion on the church in the day of Pentecost, being also the Lord's day. In this manner we ought to glorify God, giving honour to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, upon this holy day, if we would keep the Sabbath acceptably to the Lord.

(2.) Let us mind the direction of the Holy Ghost in Isa. lviii. 13. with respect to the keeping of this day, to wit, to "call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and honour him, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words." Which direction teacheth us, that the best way to prevent Sabbath breaking, and to honour God on his own day, is to "call the Sabbath a delight." O that we knew what this meaneth!

Quest. "When may we be said to call the Sabbath our delight?"

Ans. 1. We call it our delight, when we rejoice at the approach of the Sabbath, and make due preparation for it; and when we solace our souls, in the joyful expectation of communion with God on his own day, saying with David, Psal. xliii. 4. "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." 2. When we give the Sabbath an early welcome, and stir up ourselves to seek God betimes upon it; like David, Psal. lxii. 1. "O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee." 3. When we are dissatisfied with those things that would hinder us from the right keeping of the Sabbath, and are grieved that we can keep Sabbaths no better. 4. When we esteem every minute of Sabbath time to be most precious, and are careful that none of it be wasted away; but order matters so wisely, that one duty of the Sabbath may not justle out another; that is, to be so early in our closet-devotion, that the closet may not hinder family duties; and so to perform these, that they may not encroach upon God's public worship. 5. When we are concerned to have all belonging to us to keep the Sabbath as well as ourselves, and glad to see this holy day regarded and honoured by all about us. Then it may be said, we "call the Sabbath a delight."

Now, after all I have said, let me come in the end, in the name of that great Lord who instituted the Sabbath for his own glory, and the good of men, earnestly to exhort, beseech and obtest, all ranks and degrees of persons, whether they be parents or children, masters or servants, magistrates or people, young or old, to put all honour and respect upon this holy day; to sanctify it as God requires, and abstain from all worldly employments and recreations upon it. Do not grudge your Maker his one day of seven, but be willing to dedicate it wholly to his worship and service. O how do you think to spend a whole eternity in God's holy presence, and in holy spiritual exercises, if you cannot bring yourselves to spend one day in a week in holy work? Again, see that you be impartial in his service, be as willing to hear what God saith to you from his word, as you would have God to hear what you say to him in prayer. Some are all for prayers, as if they were only to tell God what they would have from him; but care not for sermons, or for hearing what God requires and expects from them: But, if you would have God to hear your prayers when you

speak to him, you must diligently hearken to his word when he speaks to you. It is by hearing the word upon the Lord's day, that God hath converted many thousands to himself. The Sabbath is a merciful institution to lost sinners for their salvation, and many have been, and will for ever be, thankful for it: For hereby they have been led to make proper stands in life, and to review their bypast actions, so as to order their course more wisely for the time to come; which they had never done, if they had not been led to a religious retirement on the Lord's day.

Seeing this holy day is such a blessing and privilege to the world, let me entreat parents, masters, magistrates, and all who have power, to exert it for promoting the keeping of it. You are not only to sanctify the Sabbath yourselves, but also you must do your utmost that those under you do it likewise. This you are bound to by the Lord's express charge in the fourth command, where it is said, "Thou, thy son, thy daughter, thy servants, the stranger within thy gates;" importing, that you are to use your power and influence over all within your gates, to cause them to observe the Sabbath, and keep them from profaning it; lest God impute their sins to you, as to Eli in the like case, for not using your power to restrain them. It is not indeed in the power of persons in authority, to make all those religious who are under their jurisdiction; but it would put them in a likely way of being so, to keep them from such things as would hinder the religion of that day, and cause them attend the means of instruction; and also to tell them in private of the rest and happiness of the world to come, purchased by Christ, which the right keeping of the Sabbath leads unto. This ought to be the great care of parents with respect to their children in younger years. It is one of the first things that children are capable of, namely, to distinguish this day from others: and then they should be taught to lay aside their other days of diversions, even before they are capable of godly exercises; and thus they are gradually to be inured to Sabbath keeping, as the beginning of wisdom. This method took God to introduce religion into the world: It was his first appointment and institution, to rest on the seventh day, and to sanctify it, Gen. ii. 3. as if he designed this to be the foundation and beginning

of all religion. Let all heads of families follow this great example.

Likewise, we see God requires masters to take care that their servants, and all within their gates, keep the Sabbath: And, indeed, it is highly their interest and wisdom to do so; for, if you be careful that your servants do their duty to God, God will take care that your servants do their duty to you. In like manner, the civil magistrates, who are the fathers of cities and states, should use their power over all within their gates or jurisdiction, to cause them observe God's holy day. We see Nehemiah threatened bodily punishment on the men of Tyre for breaking of the Sabbath, Neh. xiii. 21. And Jeremiah, by God's appointment, calls upon the princes to see that the Sabbath be not profaned, and that upon their highest peril, Jer. xvii. 19. 25. 27. and hence it is that our kings and parliaments have made so many excellent laws against the profanation of the Sabbath. May God put it into the hearts of those, who ought to be preservers and executors of laws, to put them in execution! This would tend much to the glory of God, and the welfare of nations, cities, and families. But *lastly*, Let me exhort all in inferior stations, both young and old, to observe the fourth command, as they regard the salvation of their precious and immortal souls in the eternal world, and the peace of their consciences when they come to lie on a death-bed, which they should be looking out for every day. Let me address both young and old upon this head.

1. As for you that are young, I entreat you to "remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy." Improve this day with all care and earnestness; for it is the day wherein poor sinners usually begin their acquaintance with God, and conversion to him: and the proper season for this work is the time of youth; for now the heart is most tender and pliable, and sooner melted for sin, than afterwards, when you come to greater age: For, the longer you go on in sin, the heart will turn the harder, and the conscience more seared. The longer you forget God, the more estranged you will grow, and unwilling to return to him. The branches of a tree while young, may be bowed and trained up any way; but when they are old they will not ply.

Again, consider, that the sooner you begin to sanctify the Sabbath, and be serious about your souls, God will love

you the better. See how he remembers the kindness of youth, Jer. ii. 2. "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness," &c. He loves those who come in at the first sound of the gospel, far more than rebels, who stand out till the last, that they can do no more. The fewer calls and invitations you resist, the more kindly will you be accepted of God. He loved a young Abijah, a young Josiah, a young Timothy; and John is called the "disciple whom Jesus loved," John xiii. 23. because he was youngest and earliest converted. See how affectionately Paul salutes Epenetus, by the title of his "well beloved," because of his being "Christ's first fruits in Achaia," Rom. xvi. 5. And if Paul loved him so much, to be sure Christ loved him far more.

Moreover, do not think that justice will spare you, if it find you in sin, and out of Christ, because you are young. Presume not upon mercy upon this account; remember that threatening, Psal. lxviii. 21. "God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of him that goeth on still in his trespasses." You have no ground to think that he will spare you till you be old and bald-headed: no, he may even take you by the hairy scalp while you are in your youthful vigour and freshness, and punish you, as he hath done many others before you.

O young folk, if you would mind your souls, and sanctify the Sabbath in the days of youth, take these few directions:

1. Look always on death as near, and within a few steps of you. Alas! many young folk think it is as improper for them to be thinking on their graves, as to think of going to bed at noon: their sun is high, and it is a long time to night; they look on death at forty or fifty years distance. O what folly is this! Do you not see graves of your length, and skulls of your size, in the church-yard? Yea, do you not see twenty die young, to one that live to old age? Let death and eternity be then the frequent subjects of your meditation on the Lord's day.

2. Think much this day upon your vileness and misery by nature; that you are "children of wrath, heirs of hell, enemies, to God, and strangers to Christ and the covenant

of grace; yea, servants to sin, and bond-slaves to the devil:" For the prodigal never thought of turning to his father, till he saw himself in a lost and undone condition.

3. Think much on Christ's fitness, fulness, and suitableness for all your wants and maladies. In him you may find a remedy for whatever troubles you. Is it guilt? here is pardon. Is it great sins? here's a Redeemer's blood that cleanseth from all sin. Are you condemned? here sufficient righteousness to justify you. Is pollution and filthiness your fear? here a deep and open Fountain that runs continually. Are you chained prisoners? here liberty. Are you drowned in debt? here a ransom and Surety. Are you diseased? here Balm. Are you poor? here fine gold. Are you dead? here the Resurrection and the Life. Are you starving? here the manna and the fatted calf. Are you weak, and unable for duty? here all-sufficient grace and strength. Yea, he "is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him:" And particularly, he says of little children, "Suffer them to come unto me; and, him that cometh (saith he) I will in nowise cast out."

4. Let children and young folk carefully attend ordinances this day in the church; lie close by the pool side, till it please the Angel of the covenant to come and put you in. Study to remember what you hear, and give an account thereof to your parents when you come home.

5. Early acquaint yourselves with the scriptures; read much of them this day, and meditate on them, Psal. cxix. 9. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereunto, according to thy word." How came Timothy to be so well acquainted with Christ and his way? but because "from a child he knew the scriptures," 2 Tim. iii. 15.

6. Be much this day in prayer; for the prayers of young folk are very pleasant music in God's ears. It would be both very pleasant and profitable, if children of the same family would take some time this day to meet, and read, and pray together; for so the examples, and hearing of one another, would be mutually helpful, and stir them up to a concern about their duty. It is the fault of parents, that do not put them on to this practice. If children did thus begin early to the service of God, it would become habitual

and delightful to them afterwards. But, alas! instead of this, many parents let their children run and play through the streets, and in the church and church-yard, on the Sabbath, without restraint. But, let such parents remember that though children die in their iniquities, yet their blood God will require at their hand one day.

II. I shall close with a word to aged people. You that are old men and women, give ear to what I am to say. Consider how many Sabbaths you have mis-spent, and mourn for it. In threescore years time you have above three thousand Sabbaths to reckon for, and if God "lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plumet," you will not be able to answer for one of them. O humble yourselves deeply before God, and employ Christ to clear your counts for you. Put on resolutions in his strength, to improve time better for the future, and particularly the Sabbaths which God may yet allow you, for securing an interest in Christ, and making provision for long lasting eternity. Have you not great need for it? Alas! there are many old persons who have all yet to do. Their glass is near run, and their sun is at the setting; and yet they have their work to begin, and their journey to set out for; though they have lived threescore years in God's world, yet they never spent three hours of all that time in sincere serving of God, or providing for endless eternity. They never communed with their hearts, thought on their ways, shed a tear for sin, or fell on their knees to cry, "Lord, what shall I do to be saved?" What hope shall I have in a dying hour? Where will I take up my lodging through eternity? How many old persons are grossly ignorant of the first principles of religion! Yea, many children of five or six years old will far outstrip them. O what is the reason of all this, but the neglect and mis-spendiag of the Sabbath day, and the contempt of the means of grace and knowledge which you might have enjoyed thereupon? Well then, what resolve you to do for the time to come? Have you not forgotten God and Christ, and neglected your souls and heaven long enough? Or, will you do it to your dying hour? Are you content to go to the grave without Christ, and without hope? O what a sad sight is it, to see gray hairs and graceless meeting together! to see men put to look through their spectacles, but never minding to look to their Saviour!

to see them leaning on their staves, but never think of relying on Christ for salvation! to see age forcing them to bow and bend their bodies to the earth, but yet never bowing a knee in secret, to beg repentance! O what a shame is it to live fifty or sixty years in the world, without a fervent prayer, or penitent tear for sin! to live without God, without Christ, and without faith! O what will you answer for the fearful abuse of God's long suffering patience! Old sinner, better thou hadst died when a child, or when first born, than to have lived so long, and go to hell at last. If thou diest old in age, and old in sin, what a hot and fiery hell mayest thou look for, at last! O how many Sabbaths and sermons! how many calls, counsels, and exhortations, have you to answer for! Remember, you will be called to an account for every year, month, day, and hour, you have lived: And, what account can you give of fifty years spent in sin, sixty years lived in a Christless and prayerless state, or three thousand Sabbaths trifled away? Will you not be persuaded then to flee to Christ, as thy Surety and Cautioner, to clear thy counts, and pay thy debts before the door be shut; and improve the time and Sabbaths which remain, for God's glory and your precious soul's advantage. And to him, who can effectually persuade and enable you so to do, be praise for ever. *Amen.*

APPENDIX.

MEDITATIONS

FOR THE SABBATH-DAY.

MEDITATION I.

On the Burial of CHRIST, from John xix. 40, &c.

ON our Friday Christ was crucified and laid in the grave; on our Saturday, which was the Jewish Sabbath, Christ lay dead and buried all that day in the grave; on the Sunday, or first day of the week, Christ rose from the grave.

Observe, 1. How low Christ did humble himself for us; he was content not only to become a man, but a poor man of sorrows for us, yea, a deserted man, a condemned man, a dead man, and lie as a dead corpse in the earth for us. This is the lowest step he could descend. Psal. xxii. 15. "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death."

2. Observe how he humbled himself in his burial: 1. He was not buried by friends, but strangers. 2. Not with herald, escutcheons, hearse, and other solemnities, as became the Prince of the kings of the earth, but in a very private, hasty manner. 3. Not in the sepulchre of the kings, and of his father David, not in the burying-place of his ancestors, but in the sepulchre of a stranger. Behold! how poor was the heir of all things! While he lived, he had not a house of his own where to lay his head; and when he was dead, he had no where to lay his body. O deep humiliation! Was he who lay in the Father's bosom from all eternity, now laid in the bosom of the earth? O wonder at it, that he was willing to stoop so low, to ransom our souls that were sunk as low as hell by sin! O! men and angels can never enough admire this love of Jesus! that he who wore the keys of hell and death at his girdle, should be con-

tent to be locked up in the prison of the grave, and to be arrested there this whole day, for our debt, by divine justice.

3. Observe how long Christ the Lord of life continued death's prisoner, the grave's captive: how long death had power and dominion over him, even to the third day. O how did devils triumph this day! We have not only bruised his heel, but his heart also, and behold he lieth in dust. How did wicked men rejoice! how did death domineer over him! Men have brought him into my territories, and there I hold him bound with my fetters. Now would his enemies say, Is this the light of the world, that lies so low in the land of darkness? Is this the teacher of the way to heaven, that cannot now move his tongue, or speak a word? Is this he that raised others from the dead, that lies himself among the dead? Well, but the triumph of these wicked ones was but short. Christ rose and put them all to silence.

4. Observe Christ's love, that was content to let devils insult and triumph over him for a while, that they might not triumph over you, O believer, for ever. He was humbled to lie in the grave for a while, that you might not lodge in hell for ever.

5. Observe, Christ lay buried this day, that he might bury all the elect's sins for ever out of God's sight, that they might never rise against them in judgment. O what comfort is this, O believer, thy sins are buried, and shall never appear against thee to thy condemnation.

6. Observe, Christ lay buried this day, that he might bury the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath, with all the rest of their Levitical types and ceremonies. Christ has taken off that yoke from our necks, glory to his name.

7. Observe how Christ lay buried this day, that he might sweeten the grave, warm and perfume that cold unpleasant bed for believers to lie in. The grave was once a part of the curse denounced against fallen mankind, and it is so still to sinners out of Christ, Gen. ii. "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return." The grave had the nature and use of a prison, to keep the body of sinners against the great assizes, and then to deliver them up to the hands of a great and terrible judge: But Christ, by lying in it all this day, has turned it from a prison to a bed of rest, Isa. lvii. 2. "He

shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his righteousness." Why? as Christ there did rest in hope, so shall believers be partakers of his hope. See Psal. xvi. 10. "My flesh shall rest in hope." So Proverbs xiv. 32. "The righteous hath hope in his death."

Exhortation. As ye would partake of the virtue of Christ's lying in the grave, see that ye get union with Christ now by a true faith; death nor the grave will not loose this union, it is indissolvable. O believer, the grave shall be a sweet privileged place to you; sin nor guilt shall not lie down there with you. Sin is a bad bed-fellow, but a worse grave-fellow. That is a terrible word, Job xx. 11. "His bones are full of the sins of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust." It shall not be so with you. No, Christ has freed you of guilt, and has made your bed to sleep in; it is like a soft bed in a quiet room, where the weary shall be at rest. Christ himself keeps the keys of the room, and watches by you while you lie sleeping there, and will be ready to open the door to let you out again. "I have the keys of death," Rev. i. 18. None can take them out of his hand.

MEDITATION II.

On the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, from Thess. i. 10. "Whom God hath raised from the dead."

THE resurrection of Christ from the dead is a fundamental article of our religion, and serves to support all the rest: For

1. If Christ rose from the dead, then he was a person sent from God, to do that work in the world which he gave out; because the majesty of heaven would never have given an impostor such glorious credentials as a resurrection from the dead; a work which nothing but omnipotency could accomplish.

2. If Christ rose from the dead, all the promises of the gospel, relating to the enjoyments and blessings of a future

life, will certainly be fulfilled to them; and whatever Christ has said, may be depended on, and trusted to, as certainly to come to pass.

3. It is true indeed, the Christian religion is so framed, as in all respects to be admirably serviceable to the ends and purposes of a temporal felicity; for the devout and awful regard to God, and a future life, and those principles of generous love and charity, which it tends to inspire mankind with, contribute highly to the good order and peace of the world. If pride and envy, if covetousness and ambition, if malice and revenge, if falsehood and deceit; if such passions as these are the true causes of all those calamities and misfortunes which men groan under, then the gospel, which strikes so directly at all these, even in men's tempers and hearts, as well as in their outward conversation, doth lay the surest foundations possible for a quiet and comfortable life in the present world.

Yea, the gospel of Christ strengthens the obligations of the law of nature; it furnishes men with far nobler motives to perform all the duties of that law, and threatens severer punishments for the breach of it; and thus it highly conduceth to the welfare of society and government.

4. The true foundation and origin of atheism or deism, is a man's coming under a stated resolution to endure no curb or restraint in the prosecution of his design of being happy in this world, by the enjoyment of its pleasures; and therefore the scripture or the gospel, which pretend to abridge men of this liberty, and would oblige them to a strictly abstemious and self-denying life, and a ready submission to all sufferings which the power and malice of the world may at any time inflict for the profession of it, must of course be rejected as any divine revelation, and made the mere invention of a set of crafty designing men, who were fond to be the heads of a new religion, and of bringing the world to submit to their imposition.

5. As for the religion of Mahomet, he was a man of a vicious profligate life; and he framed it to serve a carnal worldly interest; it was planted in the world by force and violence, and never offered any other arguments to persuade men of the truth of it, but the sword and heavy taxes and exactions. But, with respect to the Christian religion nothing of this kind can be pretended.

6. The law of nature is a divine impression on the reasonable nature of man, by which he is informed what is good and evil, and directed how to behave himself as a rational creature ought to do. Now, the gospel adopts and enforces this law with the strongest arguments and considerations.

7. Many who are baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, do treat him in such a manner, as Mahometans, who are his professed enemies, would abhor to do. The Mahometans do honour him with the venerable titles of *the Word* and *Power of God.* And though they will not allow him to be so great a prophet as Mahomet, yet their prophet has taught them so much respect, and so high an esteem for ours, that, should they be witnesses to the affronts some offer him here, they would be ready to revenge them upon them.

8. Some matters of fact may be so convincingly made out by the testimony of others, as to bring men to a perfect assurance of the truth of them, so as there can be no room left to suspect any fraud or deceit therein. For if we must not thus believe the testimony of others, there could be no administration of justice in the world; for legislators and governors cannot be in every place to observe what is done by every person, but must depend on the testimony of others in dispensing rewards and punishments to good and bad, according to their several merits. Again, all our civil interests and privileges depend on this kind of testimony; for how can we justify our claim to houses, lands, goods, or effects, which we come to possess by virtue of birth or parentage, will or testament, disposition or sale, but by the testimony of others? Again the refusal of this testimony would cut off all kind of history, geography, or chronology, as useless, or as mere fable and romance. We should not believe there was ever any such thing as the Roman empire, or Roman emperors; we should not believe there is any kingdom or city in the world, but such as we have seen with our eyes.

9. All sects and parties of men, since Christ's days, have granted, that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, who was born at Bethlehem in Judea, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, and crucified at Jerusalem in the reign of Tiberius,

Pontius Pilate being then the Roman governor in Judea. The Mahometans acknowledge all this frankly except the last part, out of an excess of respect to Jesus Christ; they will by no means allow of his infamous crucifixion and death, but affirm, that he was taken up into heaven, and some image of him only left upon the cross in his room, by which the Jews, as well as his own followers, who pretended to be witnesses of the fact, were imposed on, and made to believe that he suffered, when in reality he did not. But this is a groundless fiction, contrary to all sense and reason, like many others in their Alcoran. But however, they all own that there was such an excellent person, who lived such a life, taught such doctrine, and wrought such miracles, as Christians give out.

10. The Jews freely own there was such a person who died such a death at Jerusalem: And hence they bestow the reproachful name on Him, of *Talui*, or a person that was hanged, and call the Christians, the servants of *Talui*. Though they disown him to be the Messiah, yet they never refuse there being such a person. Their learned countryman, Josephus (no Christian) his testimony concerning him is well known to all the learned world, *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 4. *p.* 261. *Edit. Genev.* 1935, where he plainly testifies of the life, miracles, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and of the fulfilling of the prophecies in him, and of the wonderful conversion both of Jews and Gentiles to the faith of his gospel. Some indeed question the genuineness of this passage of Josephus, but without just ground; for we find this testimony taken notice of as his by very ancient writers, as Eusebius in Hist. Eccles. lib. I. *cap.* ii. *page* 30. *Edit. Paris*, 1659, *in vita Tiberii:* also by *Nicephorus Calistus*, by *Sozomen*, by *Jerom*, by *Isodorus Pelusiola*, *&c.*

Object. This passage is not taken notice of by the ancient defenders of Christianity, as Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, &c. *Ans.* The reason of this might be, the copies of Josephus they chanced to make use of might want this testimony, which, in all likelihood, was razed out of as many copies as the malicious Jews could come at: For this testimony of such a famous man as Josephus, one of their own country and religion, against the Jews, for treating such an excellent person, so barbarously, could not but expose them

as an execrable generation through all the world. So that it is not to be doubted but they would use all possible artifices to take out this testimony of Josephus, wherever they had the management of the copies, either by themselves, or others, their emissaries for that purpose. But it was not possible for them to compass the razing it out of all the copies dispersed up and down the world. Besides, this famous testimony hath the manifest stamp of Josephus's style and diction. Again, we have certain evidence of other testimonies being razed out of Josephus: For Eusebius (we find) quotes Josephus as recording how just and righteous a man James was, called the brother of Christ, and saying, that the sober and more considerate men among the Jews believed the destruction of Jerusalem to be a punishment inflicted on them for murdering of him. Likewise we have Origen, and Jerom, and Suidas, quoting Josephus for the same passage. And yet in our days there is no such passage to be found in Josephus. Now, would so many authors have agreed in appealing to Josephus for such a passage, if they had not really found it in him? Would it not have exposed their cause to the contempt of all the world, to have asserted a thing which every body could have refuted as false?

11. Ancient pagan writers have owned the same thing concerning Christ; as Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny, &c. Yea, Lucian expressly owns the crucifixion of Christ, though he jeers both him, and the Christians his worshippers, on that account. So doth Julian the appostate; he owns the truth of facts concerning Christ, though he endeavours what he can to lessen the reputation of his life and miracles, and alleges, that all he did was no great matter, but only to open the eyes of the blind, restore limbs to the lame, and deliver persons possessed from the power and enchantments of devils, which he seemed to make little account of. It is true, he doth not notice his raising the dead, but passes that by in silence, being what he could not pretend to answer. The Jews also owned the miracles; but alleged that he did all his wonderful works by virtue of the sacred tetragrammation. Also Celsus, that enemy of Christianity, confesses the truth of Christ's nativity, his journey into Egypt, his passing from place to place with his disciples, the fact of his miracles, his being betrayed, and, lastly, his

death and passion. I grant they make all these concessions, in order to their scoff and ridicule: However, it shows the things were so evident, they could not be denied; but Origen sufficiently chastises and exposes him for railing.

12. It is certain that the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, concerning the life and actions of Christ and his apostles, were their genuine compositions, and not the writings of any other. To confirm this, consider that there is no reason to doubt, that the first teachers of the Christian faith would use the most effectual means for propagating a doctrine they so zealously espoused themselves, and they would not on that score neglect so direct and necessary a method for obtaining their end, as that of committing their doctrines to writing. This is what may be rationally expected from the policy and care of the first founders of any sect, as being a step so necessary, in order to the preservation and progress thereof. All the sects who have made any figure in the world, have taken this course, and so have the founders of Christianity too. While the *autographa*, or original manuscripts of these penmen were preserved in the church, there was no access to impose doctrines or facts on the world in their names, contrary to what they had written. And Tertullian, who flourished at the latter end of the second century, or the very beginning of the third, intimates, that these venerable writings were preserved till his time. Again, no particular sects of Christians could ever get the writings of the New Testament so forged or adulterated, but all the other sects of Christians would have proclaimed the imposture to the world. The enmity and quarrels among different parties, were a strong guard on these sacred books, that no designing party could ever foist into these books their own notions, seeing the copies were dispersed among all the sects.

MEDITATION III.

Of the certainty of Christ's *Resurrection.*

WE have many undeniable evidences of it: 1. The testimony of many eye-witnesses; for, besides the apostles, who were witnesses of it in an eminent manner, there were many others: For Paul tells us, that in his time there were still remaining the greater part of more than 500, who did all at one time see Jesus after his rising again. Now, an imposture may lie concealed for a while in a few hands, but it is next to impossible that it should lie long undiscovered in the hands of a great many. It shocks a man to think, that so many persons should agree in all the punctilios of a notorious lie, and that they should agree to stand by it in so peremptory a manner as these persons did, and never clash together in any instance whatsoever. It is commonly observed that plots never thrive so well as when there are few let into the secret; and large cabals of knaves and liars seldom fail to tell tales of one another.

2. These witnesses had personal knowledge of what they testified: Yea, they not only declared that they saw Christ, but many of them, that they saw him frequently and familiarly, and that for a considerable tract of time. They conversed with him for forty days; they ate and drank with him; they saw him do several wondrous works; they received orders and instructions from him about the government of his church; he bid them, "Go, teach and baptize all nations;" he promised them his peace and blessing in so doing, to the end of the world; he commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high; and a great many other things are recorded, that he said to them; and after all, they saw him taken up from them, and ascend into heaven, angels standing by. Now, it never could be a dream or imagination in so many men, for so many weeks, to fancy all these things alike, without the least variation.

3. Consider the manner of the testimony, and how they delivered it. They invoked God's tremendous name, and begged his assistance and blessing. They appealed to him

as the omniscient judge of the world, concerning the sincerity and integrity of their hearts. They declared they did not this of themselves, but by God's order and appointment; and that he gave them power of working signs and wonders for the confirmation of all they said; and they accordingly wrought them before all men.

4. They did not testify of a matter that was transacted at a distance from the place where they gave their testimony, nor a long time after the thing was done. No, there is no ground of objection on any of these accounts: For those men appeared upon the very spot that was the scene of the action at Jerusalem, where Christ was crucified, and where they affirmed he also rose. They neither sent people a great way to inquire, nor did they defer the publication of it till Jesus Christ was forgotten, and the story of his resurrection worn out of mind. No, instead of that, they did it while it was fresh in the minds and mouths of all men, and while those persons who could have confuted them were alive, and ready to be produced, if they had any thing to have advanced against it.

5. They did not make a secret of this matter, but declared it in the most public and open mannner that possibly could be. It was not a story whispered among those of their own party, but proclaimed in the ears of all people, and at a time when Jerusalem was crowded with foreigners of all nations, and where was no want of persons able and curious enough to inquire into the truth of all the strange reports they made. They went into the temple and into the synagogues, and preached the resurrection of Christ; yea, in the most august councils of the Jews, they testified it to the rulers and high-priests who had condemned Christ. Peter's bold speech is most remarkable, Acts iv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. And we see how confounded the whole council was with their testimony; and not one of them had the confidence to tell them that they were publishing a notorious lie.

6. These persons were men of such probity and virtue, that none of their adversaries could ever call in question, nor show to the world that they were ill men.

7. They were persons not bred up in courts, nor instructed in the arts and intrigues of the world, able to persuade

people by elegant discourses, &c. No, they were generally mean, though plain and honest men, and their discourses plain and homely: And though Paul was a man of polite learning, yet he would make no use of human learning in the propagation of Christianity.

8. They could not possibly have any secular view, by preaching such a doctrine to the world: Nay, in preaching it, they acted against all the rules of worldly interest and policy, and could have no prospect from the world, but what was frightful and discouraging; their doctrine being to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. They could not propose to themselves either to gain reputation and esteem, or to advance their fortunes in the world; nay, suffering the greatest hardships was all they had in their view.

9. Consider how severe the laws were which they published against lying, forgery, and a false testimony: And if they themselves were guilty of it, they were condemned to everlasting punishment for what they did, by the very doctrine which they preached. Yet in this doctrine they persisted to the last, and if it were a lie, they went out of the world with a horrible lie in their mouths, which is horrid to think; for so they could have no hope of finding mercy and forgiveness at God's hands; and thus you would make them the most depraved wretches in the world.

10. Now, had they been men who had no religious awe or sense of God themselves, how is it credible that they would have been so very zealous and industrious to impress it upon the minds of others, and to press them to love and fear him, as the scope of all their writings and sermons do show? How oft do they tell us of a judgment day, and of God's being the searcher of the thoughts and counsels of the heart.

11. It is plain to a demonstration, that these persons heartily believed the doctrines they preached to the world: otherwise, how would they have exposed themselves to such dangers and sufferings upon that score?

12. The Jews who lived at that time were infallibly convinced of the resurrection of Jesus Christ: which appears from this, that the writers of the gospel-history did in express terms publish to the world, that the Jews bribed the

soldiers to report that the body of Jesus Christ was stolen out of the grave by his disciples. Now, this was a home charge on the Jews, and shows them to be the most degenerate wretches, that they would stick at nothing to carry on their designs, even the most abominable piece of forgery and bribery. Nay, their priests and rulers would be guilty of this villany, to tamper with soldiers in this manner. Well, if these chief priests and fathers of Israel had been unjustly calumniated in this manner, it might have been expected that they would have exerted themselves in some extraordinary manner to clear themselves of this aspersion, and that the whole nation would have been in a tumult about it: For they would see that their religion, as well as their credit, was at stake; as this account of their proceedings was like to be published through the world, and transmitted to the latest posterity. Now, surely one would think the Christians would have been solemnly called to account for this provoking piece of history, and challenged to make it good, and that with the greatest zeal and concern. Well, but there is nothing like this; the Jews content themselves with private whispers, to set the story about, which the bribed soldiers had reported, and make no resentment of the charge. From all which we may warrantably conclude, that they were conscious to themselves of the truth of the charge, and knew that they had bribed the soldiers to make the report; and consequently that they knew Christ was risen, otherwise they had not bribed the soldiers.

13. Although the disciples of Christ had been so wicked as to have contrived the stealing away the body of Jesus, it was impossible for them to have accomplished it. The Jews were uncommonly intent and watchful about this event; for they came to Pilate, and told him, that Jesus had foretold, while alive, that he would rise again the third day; and it was proper that a guard should be set upon the sepulchre till that day was over, lest his disciples should come and steal him away, and say, that he was risen, and so the latter error would be worse than the first. They were sufficiently aware of the consequences of this event, that it would overturn their religion, and establish Christianity, and therefore they take all necessary precautions; and this was ordered by God's wise providence for ascertaining the truth of the event.

14. The coined story of carrying off the body of Jesus, while the guard slept, is so very gross, that it will scarce bear a telling. For if the disciples did this while the soldiers slept, how could the trick be known? Did the disciples tell it themselves, or were the guard conscious of what passed in their sleep? Were not their senses locked up during their sleep?

15. If the disciples had been concerned in so vile a piece of imposture, with what courage or confidence could they have entered on their ministry, and preached salvation in Christ's name? Could they have ever hoped for any countenance from heaven, or for assistance from the Spirit to work miracles, while they were propagating a notorious cheat. They might have expected that both heaven and earth would be engaged against them in every step of their undertaking, and so would have dropped their design of propagating the Christian faith. But being perfectly assured of the truth of Christ's resurrection, and of all they preached, they undertook and went through their work with that indefatigable zeal and industry, with that life and spirit far transcending all that ever was known in human nature before, that no storms nor difficulties, dangers nor deaths, could in the least shake them; yea, they were animated the more by the greatest of trials and persecutions.

For confirming the truth of the witnesses' testimony concerning our Lord's resurrection, consider the horrid and intolerable absurdities that would follow on questioning or denying the truth of it.

1. A deist, who denies it, must believe that a despicable company of wilful impostors and deceivers, men of a hated nation and religion, without power or force, without learning or experience, without wit or policy, should be able to run down all wit, learning, power and policy of the world; and by preaching a most despised, incredible, and seemingly ridiculous doctrine, directly contrary to all the worldly interests and humours of men, and to their religions and customs, yea, and to their reason and philosophy too, should propagate the belief of it far and wide through the earth, so that there was scarce a nation in the whole compass of the globe, but what in whole or in part received this fiction, as the most sacred truth of God, and accordingly laid the

whole stress of their salvation upon it! Or if deists will suppose that the apostles and their companions were a company of brain-sick enthusiasts, or of lunatics and madmen; then they must own that such pitiful weak persons did argue with so much art and force, as to overpower all the learning and wisdom of the world: That all the sages, philosophers, and statesmen, who embraced Christianity in great numbers, as well as the poor and illiterate, were convinced and persuaded by mere enthusiasm; that they mistook downright raving for the strongest reason, and a chain of incoherent falsities for bright and evident demonstrations of truth!

2. The deists must believe that twelve poor fishermen were not only able to compass that vast design of making the world stoop to the laws they imposed: but also that they laid their plots so deep, that the effects of it should be permanent and lasting, and no succeeeding age or generation ever be able to fathom it, and show where the cheat lay. Strange! that a company of illiterate men outdid the profoundest wisdom and sagacity of mankind, and concerted matters so artfully, that none of all the penetrating wits of the world should, for so many centuries, after the strictest examination, find it possible to discover the least failure or flaw in the contrivance.

3. They must believe that these persons absolutely divested themselves of all regard to their own preservation or happiness; that they despised all the comforts and enjoyments of life, and ventured upon poverty and misery, upon torments, upon death, yea, upon damnation itself in the next world, and all for nothing but the propagating of a cheat, which is most absurd to suppose.

4. They must believe that these very persons, who but a few hours before had so little spirit and courage left them, that they forsook their master in his extremity, and durst not own themselves his disciples, nor show themselves openly for fear of the Jews, should all of a sudden grow so resolute, as to venture on that bold and hazardous undertaking, of forcing the sepulchre, and carrying off his body; and that they effectuated the design without being challenged by one of the guard.

5. They must believe that these timorous men would, in an enterprise that required so much expedition and dis-

patch, spend so much of their time in divesting a dead body of its burial-clothes, and wrap them up by themselves; and not rather choose to carry off all together in haste, lest the next minute the guard might wake and come upon them.

6. They must believe that a set of the greatest cheats that ever the world saw, did, notwithstanding, furnish mankind with the most exact system of morality that ever was, and lay the best foundations and scheme for the peace and happiness of the world, that could be laid! That the vilest hypocrites would spend all their time, and lives too, in indefatigable labours to make other men upright and sincere, and denounce damnation against lying, dissimulation, &c. That the system they compiled of religion was a standing comment of their own shame; and that all their sermons and writings were but so many satires and lampoons upon themselves.

Object. Christ's resurrection is attested only by his own friends and disciples. Why did he not converse as publicly with men as he did before? Why did he not appear to the chief priests and elders of the Jews, to have convinced them of the truth of this fact?

Ans. 1. We are not to prescribe rules to the Divine Majesty; all his works are done in infinite wisdom, and he is not obliged to account to us for his actings: he himself knows best what makes most for his own glory and the happiness of his creatures.

2. It was not to a few that Christ appeared, but to the twelve apostles, to the seventy disciples; yea, to five hundred brethren at once, to whom he gave the most convincing proofs of his resurrection.

3. It was a sufficient demonstration to the Jews of Christ's resurrection, Pilate's securing the sepulchre with a guard of soldiers, and Christ's body not being found therein. They might have been assured that a handful of timorous men would never adventure on stealing it: and they had a sufficient confirmation from the soldiers, who came into the city, and showed to the chief priests all the things that were done, viz. the earthquake, angel's descent, &c. Matt. xxviii. 11.

4. Christ had given sufficient proof of his divine mission to the Jews before, by the miracles he wrought, which they blasphemously opposed, and maliciously prosecuted him to death as a traitor; and therefore because of their malice and obstinacy, they were unworthy of such a privilege as his conversing with them.

5. Though he had appeared to them, these malicious men would not have acknowledged him to be the person that was crucified, but would have alleged he was an impostor, set up by the Christians to personate the true Jesus, and been more enraged against his followers than ever.

6. Though Christ had risen and appeared in such a manner, yet deists would have quarrelled the testimony of witnesses the same way they do now, saying, "How should we believe the report of others, and credit what we see not with our own eyes," &c. Christ's miracles were as publicly transacted as could have been desired; all men, and the greatest enemies, were allowed to witness them; yet deists now treat them as mere forgeries, and so would they have done Christ's appearing even to the whole Jewish sanhedrim.

Improvement. From the resurrection of Christ, we may infer, that death is fairly overcome, and swallowed up in victory. Christ went into the very den of this dragon, and foiled it. Now, though it retains its dart, yet it hath left its sting in Christ's side, so that the believer may triumph, as 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. "O death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law: But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The true believer need not have any slavish fear of death, though it frighten, yet it cannot hurt him. 2. Let believers dispose and employ their bodies, as those who know what is prepared for them at their resurrection. 3. Let us all secure to ourselves an interest in Christ and his blessed resurrection. 'Tis this hope that supports under all the troubles of this life.

MEDITATION IV.

From Eph. vi. 16. *Redeem the time.*

1. Time is one of the most precious blessings, which man enjoys in this world, a jewel of inestimable worth: It is a golden stream continually running down by us, yea, carrying us all along with it: It is a stream running from one ocean to another, from an eternity behind us, to an eternity before us.

2. That which makes time so precious mainly, is, that the salvation of our precious and immortal souls, through all eternity, depends thereupon. Upon the improvement of this short moment of time, depends a long-lasting, and never-ending eternity.

3. The expense which God the author of time is at, to create and beget it for us, shows the preciousness of it. Why? God, by his almighty power, doth continually wheel about these great luminaries of sun, moon and stars, in their annual and diurnal revolutions, to beget and furnish time to us; and these do never halt nor stop, nor come short of their appointed times of rising and setting, and all for the service of man, that he may have time for the service of his Maker, and the saving of his soul.

4. The haste that time doth make, and the consideration of its shortness, that it will quickly be gone, and that a minute of it can never be recalled, shows forth its preciousness.

5. Also the important business we have for every moment of our time, although each of us had a thousand years to live, the service of God, and saving of our souls, is such a vast work, as would require every minute of it.

6. We are ready to pass into another world, an eternal state, where every minute of our time must be accounted for, and then it must fare with us eternally, as we have spent and improven this short time here.

7. For as precious as time is, it is undervalued and lavished away more than any thing else. It is seldom taken notice of, until it is quite past away from us; we never consider its worth and usefulness till it is just ending. Hence Solomon saith, Eccl. ix. 12. "Man knoweth not his time."

8. 'Tis most just that he who hath the ordering and disposing of all things else concerning us, should be also the supreme Lord and disposer of our time, and therefore hath right to determine what time is to be allotted for our work, and what for his: And most just it is, that he, from whom we have all our time, should have his choice of it.

9 Of all time Sabbath-time is the most precious and valuable; it being the time God has allotted and set apart for himself, and upon the improvement whereof the glory of God and salvation of our souls depend in a most peculiar manner; it being the day of special access to God, and of free commerce and correspondence between heaven and earth. It is heaven's weekly market-day, or God's deal-day to the poor and needy; the day of access to God's presence-chamber. Time by some is compared to a gold ring, and the Sabbath to she sparkling diamond, which gives it its lustre, and heightens its value. Wherefore, if we be wise, we will show a peculiar esteem for the Sabbath above all the days of the week; we will reckon every moment of Sabbath-time most precious, and desire that none of it may be mispent. What Christ said to his disciples concerning the loaves and the fishes, the like he seems to speak to us concerning his holy day, "Gather up the fragments," gather up all the parcels, the spare hours and minutes of it; account them as precious as the goldsmith doth the smallest filing of his gold, and let nothing of Sabbath-time be lost.

Exhortation. Above all time redeem carefully Sabbath-time, and improve it diligently. Consider what a blessing the Sabbath is to you, if rightly improven: 1. An inn for refreshing the weary traveller, that hath been toiled and tossed with storms through the week. 2. It is Christ's weekly market-day, wherein he sets forth the richest wares and commodities for us to buy, "without money and without price," Rev. iii. 18. 3. It is the King of heaven's public deal-day, wherein he deals his bread to the hungry, and gives alms to the poor and needy. 4. It is the conversion, of inbringing and gathering the elect. Multitudes have been brought in to Christ this day. 5. It is a day of access to God, and correspondence with heaven; a day when Christ is to be seen and conversed with. You may not only have correspondence with Christ at a distance, but immediate access. You may be taken into the palace, the pre-

sence chamber, and see the King in his beauty, hear his voice, get the kisses of his mouth, the embraces of his arms; and should not this time be redeemed? 6. It is the day of heaven's festival, wherein Christ useth to feast his saints with the fatness of his house. 7. It is a day of reaping and gathering, and for laying up in store for the time to come. 8. A day for ascending the mount of transfiguration, to see Christ transfigured; a day of ascending to mount Pisgah, to see the land that is afar off.

2. Redeem Sabbath-time, for it is flying fast away; you may have but a few more Sabbaths to enjoy. The Sabbath is fast approaching that will be your last Sabbath, after which you shall see no more in this world.

3. Redeem Sabbath-time, for much depends on it, the glory of God, and salvation of your immortal souls through eternity. So important is the business that depends on the improvement of your Sabbath-time, that it would call for the improvement of every moment: Yea, though each of you had ten thousand Sabbaths to spend, the service of God, and saving of your souls, is such a vast work, as would require every minute of them.

4. Redeem Sabbath-time, for we cannot recall one Sabbath that is past; no, though we had a world to give for one Sabbath, we could not recall it. O many will be put one day to wish and cry in vain, O to recover one of these lost Sabbaths, wherein I had the free rich offer of a crucified Christ.

5. Redeem Sabbath-time, for you are just ready to pass into another world, where you must give a strict account of every Sabbath you have enjoyed, and answer for every minute of precious Sabbath-time. How will you answer for all the Sabbaths you have misimproven, for the Sabbaths of threescore years, which are above three thousand: O that will be a terrible *item* in the accounts of old graceless sinners.

Directions in redeeming Sabbath-time. 1. Carefully avoid whatever hinders it; as, 1. Atheism, or misbelief of the truth, and of the great end and design of the Sabbath. 2. Ignorance. Many are so ignorant, that they think if they pass away the Sabbath without any gross breach of it, they do well enough. 3. Sloth and laziness. Up and be doing.

2. If you would redeem Sabbath-time, repent of former misimprovements, and humble yourselves for lost Sabbaths, and cry for mercy through Christ's atoning blood.

3 Study to recompence former mismanagements by your future diligence; as a traveller who finds himself like to be benighted by his former laziness mends his pace, and goes as many miles now in one hour, as formerly he did in two.

4. Spend every Sabbath now as it were your last; and this approaching Sabbath be as diligent on it, as if it were your last: prepare for it in the evening; get up early next morning, pray, read, meditate, examine yourself, and wrestle for God's presence with you in the ordinances.

5. Hearken presently to Christ's calls in the word; believe and embrace Christ's doctrine and his righteousness, and close with him as your only help and remedy.

MEDITATION V.

Upon John xx. 20. *And when he so said, he showed them his hands and his feet. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

This was the first Christian Sabbath, and upon it the disciples met for the work and duties of the day, prayer and godly conference. Well, did the disciples meet for this work? Christ will not let them part without his peace and blessing. He comes in the midst of them, when the doors were shut; no doors nor bands can shut out Christ's presence from his disciples; and what is his salutation to them? "Peace be unto you." A most comprehensive blessing! This was the legacy he had left them a few days before, and now he makes prompt and ready payment of it to them, he will not be long owing it. *Quest.* What sort of peace is it? *Ans.* Peace with God, peace of conscience, and peace with one another. This was a blessing most suitable to them, who were so full of fears and disorders.

After this salutation he gives them a most comfortable discovery of his pierced hands and side, to convince them of the truth of his resurrection, which they were still in doubt of, by the marks and scars of the wounds which had

been made a few days before by the nails and spear: he shows them that the body they now saw alive, was the same individual body they and many others had seen dead on the cross a few days before. From this,

Observe 1. That Christ retained the scars of his wounds after his resurrection. He was not ashamed of them, but gloried in them, as conquerors glory in the marks of their wounds after bloody battles. Moreover, Christ had use for them; 1. They were to speak on earth, and demonstrate the truth of his resurrection to the world, particularly to convince unbelieving Thomas. 2. They were to speak in heaven, by the intercession that he makes for his people there, in doing whereof he shews his wounds, and therefore he ascended with them, and now appears in midst of the throne as a lamb slain, with his wounds as it were bleeding afresh, Rev. v. 6. 3. Nay, he retains them, that he may come back with them; for it seems they will be then visible, that enemies may look on him whom they pierced, Rev. i. 7. "Behold he cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him."

2. Observe the condescension and pains of a crucified Jesus to satisfy his disciples. He shewed them his hands: He is at pains first to open his hands, to let them see the marks of the wounds he got by the nails driven therein.—Next he opens his breast, to let them see the wound he got in his side by the spear that was thrust into it. O the condescension of our Lord, to confirm the faith of his poor staggering and doubting disciples.

3. Observe the effect and impression of this sight upon the disciples, "they were glad when they saw the Lord," It revived their drooping spirits, it convinced their doubting hearts, and strengthened their faith; and faith produces joy, Rom. xv. 13. 1 Pet. i. 8. Now Christ fulfilled what he said, John xvi. 22. "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice."

Doctrine. A believing and appropriating view of the wounds of a crucified and risen Jesus, is a most joyful sight.

Quest. What grounds of joy have we in this sight?

Ans. 1. This sight shews that Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us, who were objects of wrath.

2. This tells us, our debt is paid, justice is satisfied, our Surety is risen, and let out of prison.

3. We have ground of joy, that we see a shelter against all the challanges of the law and justice of God; for Christ has wrought out a law biding and justice satisfying righteousness. Here's our city of refuge against the avenger of blood. How glad was the man-slayer at this sight!

4. Thou art sure of access and acceptance with God. Why? Here is a powerful ground of intercession, the wounds and blood of the Son of God, "which speaketh better things than that of Abel," the wounds are like a mouth still open for thee, the blood like a tongue still speaking for thee.

5. The fifth ground of joy is, that the covenant is confirmed whereby thou art safe from the deluge, the rain-bow appearing, even the scarlet coloured wounds and blood of Christ, which is a sure token of God's covenant.

Inference. Then we have reason to bless God for the approach of the Sabbath; and more especially for the news of a communion Sabbath approaching, wherein we may see, in a remarkable manner, the wounds of a crucified Jesus discovered to us. O that is the most joyful sight the world ever saw! Let us welcome the Sabbath, and especially a communion Sabbath, which brings us such a sight. Every Lord's day is lovely and desirable; but a communion Sabbath is in a special manner a day of the Son of Man, a solemn and high day, a day to be remarked and remembered by all the disciples of Jesus. As the Sabbath is the most excellent of all the days of the week, so a communion Sabbath is the most desirable of all the Sabbaths of the year: For, upon such a day, a crucified Jesus is most evidently set forth before our eyes; then he appears in his dyed garments, glorious and red in his apparel, a most lovely sight to the eye of faith. These are days in God's courts indeed, far better than a thousand elsewhere.

MEDITATION VI.

On the Sabbath being a delight, from Isaiah lviii. 23. "Call the Sabbath a delight."

Great stress was always laid upon the due observation of the Sabbath-day; and it was particularly required from

the Jews, when they were captives at Babylon, that by keeping this day they might distinguish themselves from the worshippers of the gods, which have not made the heavens and the earth, Isa. lvi. 1, 2. We must put all honour and respect upon it, and call it a delight, not a task or burden. We must not only count it a delight, but call it so, by openly professing the complacency we take in the day, and the duties of it. We must call it a delight, 1. To God, in a way of thanksgiving to God for it, and earnest desire of his grace to enable us to do the work of the day, because we delight in it. 2. We must call it so to others, to invite them to come and share with us in the pleasure of it. 3. We must call it so to ourselves, that we may not entertain the least thought of wishing the Sabbath gone, that we may sell corn and wine.

Quest. 1. What is imported in calling the Sabbath a delight? *Ans.* 1. A belief that God is the author and institutor of it. 2. A knowledge of the ends and designs of it, that it is in honour of God the Creator, and of Christ the Redeemer, and for our good. 3. A thankful sense of God's goodness in instituting the Sabbath, it being a day of communion with God. 4. A high esteem of the Sabbath, as the best day of the week. 5. A cheerful compliance with the work and duties of the Sabbath. 6. A thinking on the Sabbath, looking, longing, and preparing for it, before it come. 7. A conscientious and willing performance of all the Sabbath duties. 8. A hating and avoiding all those evils and practices that are contrary to Sabbath-sanctification.

Quest. When may it be said that the Sabbath is our delight? *Ans.* 1. It is our delight, when we esteem it a privilege and favour from God to have the Sabbath; when we say, O what a favour from God is this to me, that when I have been wearying myself six days for the world, God hath appointed this day, that we may refresh ourselves from such labours, mind our souls, and seek after heaven. If we value God above the world, and the joys of heaven above the pleasures on the earth, so we will certainly value this day above all other days.

2. It is our delight, when we make it a day of visiting God, and keeping communion with him in his ordinances. The people of the world find delight in visiting their friends, and conversing and holding society with them; but much

more may we have in visiting God, and seeing him in the sanctuary, and holding sweet fellowship with him there.

3. When we are not satisfied this day with a bare approach to God; but when we go to God this day as our exceeding joy, Psal. xliii. 4. and place our happiness in the serving of God, and enjoying of him; and when we go with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4. When we draw forth our graces into holy actings and vigorous exercise: the more we are employed this day in the actings of faith and love, and hope of heaven, it will be the more delight to us.

5. When the work and duties of the Sabbath are our element and recreation; when we are in David's frame, Psal. cxxii. 1. "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go up unto the house of the Lord." This is prophesied of believers under the gospel, that they flock to ordinances on the wings of delight, "as doves to their windows," Isa. lx. 8. How great was David's delight in them, when he "desires it as one thing, that he might dwell all his days in God's house, to behold the beauty of the Lord," Psal. xxvii. 4. that is, that he might always have free access to God's house, and enjoy communion with God there. Hence he counts a day in God's courts better than a thousand elsewhere. David had many earthly things to delight in, such as 1. Great victories over enemies, which generals and warriors do greatly delight in. 2. He had palaces and gardens, which great men do delight in. 3. He had instruments of music of all sorts, which great musicians (such as David the sweet singer of Israel was) do delight much in: Yea he invented to himself all sorts of musical instruments, Amos vi. 5. Well, but though David knew as much of these earthly delights, as most men, yet he delighted most of all in the Sabbath, "a day in God's courts."

6. It is a delight, when we find increase and growth of grace in and by the ordinances. We see men delight in a market-day on which they gain much of the world; and much more will they delight in the Lord's day, who find their love to God on it more inflamed, their desires after him more enlarged, and their hope of heaven more confirmed.

7. It is a delight when we come thereon to discover our interest in the Lord Jesus, and are made to see that it was

he who died and rose from the dead this day for us. O how delightful to think, this is the day my Redeemer lived again. Do others delight in the day of their birth, and shall not I delight in the day on which my Lord did live again.

8. It is a delight when we come on the Sabbath to get assurance, that we shall keep an everlasting Sabbath with God above: And if a transient enjoyment of God in a Sabbath here be so pleasant, how much more to have the full enjoyment of God on that Sabbath above to all eternity!

Quest. 3. Do not the special delights of the Sabbath excel all other delights, and wherein do they excel?

Ans. 1. They transcend them in their foundation; they are well founded, not on mistakes and delusions, as carnal delights and pleasures are, but on the sure word of God, that is unalterable, his well-ordered covenant. Carnal men rejoice in fancies and delusions, but know not how matters are with them. If they knew how near hell and damnation they are; if they knew the shortness of their pleasures, and the length of their sorrows, they would have little heart to sport or laugh; nay, it would soon turn their laughter into mourning and lamentation.

2. Spiritual delights surpass them in reality; the pleasures of the wicked are but seeming and outward, but believers delights are real, hearty, and inward. In the midst of the laughter of the wicked, their hearts are sad; though their senses be some way tickled and affected, yet the heart is not. But with believers it is otherwise, Psalm iv. 7. "Thou hast put more gladness in my heart," &c. Spiritual delight goes to the heart.

3. They are suitable delights, seeing they are intellectual. Carnal delights in drinking, sporting, &c. make men more like beasts than men. The beasts have pain and pleasure by their senses, but not sorrow nor delight, because these are intellectual. So the joy of carnal men is rather pleasure than delight; but the more intellectual and chaste our delights are, the more pure and suitable are they to the human nature: Yea, the more our delights are in loving, praising, and worshipping God on the Sabbath, they make us more like angels than men.

4. They surpass them in innocency. Carnal delights, the more we use them, the more we are ensnared by them;

they pervert the heart, disorder the mind, and indispose for duty: But spiritual delights have no such effect; they are so far from perverting or disordering, that they corroborate and strengthen the graces; they compose and purify the mind; they make sin the more odious, and fortify us the more against the baits of sense.

5. They excel them in security. Spiritual delights are pure like crystal streams, whereas carnal delights are embittered with fear, stings of conscience, and sense of guilt.

6. They excel them in strength and sweetness. There is delight in thinking on our temporal interests, but much more in thinking on Christ, and our interest in him, and the well ordered covenant: Yea, there is more delight in the hardest part of Sabbath-work, viz. in mortifying one sin or lust, than carnel men have in satisfying a thousand.

7. They are more profitable delights. There is more profit in one day, yea, one hour's communion with God, than in the worldly gains of a thousand market days. Oh! do men toil hard in labouring six days of the week for gains of the world, and will we not labour one day for that which endureth to everlasting life?

8. They are more satisfying than all worldly delights. Surely there is more satisfaction in the spiritual recreations of this day, than in all carnal sports and pastimes whatsoever. O what satisfaction is there in thinking on the work of redemption, and of all that Christ did and suffered for the accomplishment of it. What a pleasant recreation is it to find and feel the actings of love and desire to God, and to have a sense of God's love unto the soul; to meditate on the eternal sabbath of rest from sin, sickness, temptation, and all evil whatsoever, and of joining in the perfect love and praises of that blessed company above to all eternity?

9. They surpass them in this, that they end well, whereas carnal delights do not. Carnal delights are like the crackling of thorns under a pot; they make a great blaze and noise for a little, but then they go out in darkness; or, like the light of a candle, that doth shine for a little, but then goes out in a stinking snuff. So with carnal delights, they make way for sorrow, "for the end of that mirth is heaviness," according to Prov. xiv. 18. Carnal delight and recreations, especially on the Sabbath, leave a sting behind

them, whenever conscience is awakened, and these are the forerunners of hell.

Quest. 4. What are those things in the Sabbath we ought to delight in?

Ans. 1. In the restraints which the Sabbath lays on us, in hindering us from our worldly employments and recreations, and from all the pleasures of sin; this we should delight in.

2. In the duties and services which the Sabbath obligeth us unto.

Quest. 5. What are those duties and services of the Sabbath, which we ought to delight in?

Ans. 1. There are public services and duties which we should delight in; as in the hearing of the word, prayer, praises, and receiving of the sacraments.

2. Private duties, as reading of the word, prayer, meditation, Christian conference, mourning for sin, &c.

FINIS.

LIBRARY
LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM
EXPOSITION PARK

A11623
THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.
T79
41873

A11623